The Greatest Sin Is Pride

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The Greatest Sin Is Pride

by Elenduen

Summary

My First Will/Hannibal fic so please be kind.

A rewrite for Roti.

Thanks to Freddie Lounds and Tattlecrime.com Abel Gideon believes that the best way to draw out the Chesapeake Ripper is to use Will Graham to tempt him and so after cutting the tongue out of a psychiatrist he abducts Will and proceeds to eviscerate him.

Hannibal really hates it when other people damage his things and as far as he is concerned Will belongs to him so he is not going to stand for Gideon daring to touch his empath and do damage to him.

Chapter 1

If there was one thing that Hannibal Lecter hated beyond rudeness it was other people mistreating his things.

He admitted to himself that he was a possesive man, a vain and selfish being, and that while he loved to show off his wealth and possesions to others he did not relish the option of sharing.
Of all the sins he was guilty of gluttony, greed, and jealousy were likely his worst, he was gluttenous in all things, he had to gorge himself on what he desired to feel satisfied, be that in relation to food, art, conversation, or cruelty.

His greed made it so his satisfation was short lived and he was soon craving more, desiring more, and like any sinner he always gave into this greed.

His jealousy was complex, he was not jealous of others and their possesions, positions, or atributes. He was jealous of what he possesed, he coverted all he owned and guarded it as fiercely as a dragon hording it's wealth.
His wrath when invoked following the damage or theft of any such treasure was equally as ferocious as a great fiery beast from myth.

A wrath that a killer who had dared try to take credit for his work came to know when he made the mistake of harming one that Hannibal thought of as his own.

Doctor Abel Gideon's insufferable pride which had been puffed up by Frederick Chiltons half witted attempts at psychic driving had allowed the insane former surgeon to believe himself worthy of immitating the Chesapeake Ripper and daring to lay his hands upon a man that Hannibal had come to think of, feel was his own.

Will Graham.

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When exactly Hannibal had stopped thinking of Will as an amusment, or even a potential threat to his freedom as a serial killer the Lithuanian wasn't sure.
He suspected that it was around the time that his late irritant of patient Franklyn had introduced him to the sociopathic/psychopathic murderer Tobias Budge.

Standing at the intermission of the Opera talking with Mrs Komeda and observing the rest of the socialites Hannibal had found himself considering what it might be like to have a regular compagnion for such events, someone on his arm to share in this with him.

Tobias's offer of friendship had only increased his desire for such a thing.

Not with Tobias of course, the man while in some ways like himself was too cold and remote, Hannibal himself was both of these things at times and knew that to counter it he needed someone more empathetic, or rather empathic.

Will Graham was his dream come true.

They were of course very different, and perhaps that was why Hannibal was drawn to Will, to the warmth that he exuded even as he tried to close himself off to the world.

Will was an intense man, a man of deep feelings and emotion, a man with a great sense of morality, highly intelligent, more than he gave himself credit for in fact.

Hannibal could easily envision himself moulding Will though a relationship, bringing him out of his shell and getting him to shine for the world the way he only shone in Hannibals mind right now.

During these musings Hannibal realized that he was not so much as envisioned Will as a friend, but as a lover.

This surprised him for while he'd had a couple of male lovers in his youth in Florence he had not felt the stirrings of passion towards another man in a long time.

He suspected that the poor neurotic fool Franklyn had in fact been repressing homosexuality, his adoration of Hannibal and of Tobias was more like the obsessions of a would be lover than just a friend.

Hannibal however was not repressed, he was completely secure in his sexuality, he was simply selective in those whom he took to his bed.

Will Graham's sexuality Hannibal believed was much like his own, he judged on personality, on intellect and wit rather than appearance and gender.

But Will was fragile, and Hannibal was patient, he was not going to rush things and risk scaring Will off, playing the long game always amused him anyway and adding sexual tension to the dance they were already involved in made the waltz all the more invigorating.

Besides having a delay before a meal whetted the appatite for when it came time to feast, and Hannibal was certain that when the time came to have Will in his bed he would be a feast worthy of the most gluttenous of gourmands.

Of course Hannibal's ideas of friendship and love were not the same as others. His were far more possesive and manipulative. Yes he wanted Will Graham as his lover but he also wanted him to be his alone, to have Will all to himself not shared with others.

So it was only natural that when Abel Gideon dared try to take Will from him that he reacted with the wrath known only to the Old Testamont God.

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It started aimiably enough.

Hannibal had Chilton over for dinner and had managed to wrangle Will into joining them.

Partly to simply share company with him, partly to try and get Will to consume a decent meal more often so he stopped looking like his clothes were going to fall off him and his cheek bones weren't so sharpe they could cut something!, and partly to spare himself from being bored out of his skull dealing with Chilton alone all night!.

Frederick Chilton was of course fretting over the court case about Gideon murdering the nurse at the BSHCI and his blaming Chilton for driving him to it though psychic driving.

This had brought him to Hannibal for advise in how to proceed and also to the dinner table, though not as one of the courses!, Hannibal would never eat anything of Chiltons, the man's petty jealousies and over reaching made him acidic and bitter, an altogether unpleasent marinade for the meat.

Will did not look overly comfortable in having Chilton for a fellow dinner guest but refrained from being outright rude to Chiltons face as Hannibal served them dinner.

"As always a culinary masterpiece" Chilton applauded "Don't you think Will?" he leaned forward a glint in his eyes as if he were hoping to get a reaction from Will so he might get the chance to get inside his head and learn about his "Thing" as he so indelicately put it

Will however gave Chilton a tight smile before gracing Hannibal with a real one "I can't work out why you chose to become a Doctor instead of a chef, if you had done so you'd have five star resturants all over the country by now!"

Hannibal smiled at the compliment and took a sniff and sip of his beer which of course he brewed and bottled himself. When he had learned this Will had laughed and asked if he churned his own butter and ground his own wheat too!.

Had anyone else asked anything so impertinant then Hannibal may have given serious thought to slitting their throat, however Will asked the question in such a way that it brought a smile to Hannibals face as it was clearly meant not as an insult but as a gentle tease between friends and such a show of friendship brought a warmth to Hannibals otherwise cold heart.

"Alas I think I would loose my enjoyment were I serving mass amounts of food for customers to dine on" Hannibal said "It is far more pleasing to have friends for dinner than to break bread with the masses"

For a moment his and Will's eyes met, a rare gift that Will now bestowed upon him since he rarely made eye contact with others finding the meeting of eyes too intrusive and distracting for him to feel comfortable.

The moment however was broken when Chilton sighed depressively "This food, however good feels like a last supper"

Hannibal had to remind himself that stabbing Chilton through the throat would be a bad idea and would make an awful mess of his meticulously polished floor!

"This is hardly what I would describe as a last supper" Will said "However you do have to bear responsability for Gideons belief, however brief that he was the Chesapeake Ripper"

"That is not my fault!" Chilton automatically cried "Gideon came to that belief on his own, all I did was try to help him find himself"

"Or try to make him believe he was someone else!" Will muttered

Despite his actual guilt in this Chilton looked appropriately outraged at this suggestion "I did no such thing and you are not remotely qualified to make such assumptions", he aimed his knife at Will as he spoke and a tiny drop of sauce dripped from the tip of the blade.

Hannibal's eyes followed the drop and stared at it for a moment before cutting into the conversation before it could grow anymore volatile.

"Will, Frederick I think you are both becoming too deeply impassioned on this subject"

Both men paused and turned to look at him, Will being the first look away and back down at his meal stabbing the lamb harshly with his fork

"If you poke around the mind of a psychopath then you are bound to get poked back" Hannibal said to Frederick "I am sure you were trying to help him"

"At least one of us is!" Will muttered shoving lamb in his mouth grumpily

"I tried to appeal to his vanity as a psychopath so I might help him break down the barriers in his mind" Chilton said sounding proud "I had no idea he would act in such a way"

"Of course not!" Hannibal said with false aimiability "And I am certain that the trial will fully exonerate you!"

Chilton raised his glass "Heres to that!".

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With a court date in the morning Chilton thankfully left early giving Hannibal time to spend with Will alone while sharing the cleaning up duty.

"You seem troubled" Hannibal commented as Will dried on of the plates with great care

"Aren't I always?" Will asked with a small smile

"More than usual then" Hannibal allowed "Anymore sleep walking or time loss?"

Will shook his head setting the plate on the side

"Trouble sleeping then, headaches, and bad dreams"

Will grinned "Can't get anything past you!"

"Hm Uncle Jack is putting a lot of pressure on you, a great deal of weight on your shoulders. Is using passive agressive manipulation to keep you from walking away"

"Passive agressive?", Will frowned shaking his head and leaned against the counter "Jack is not what I would describe as passive agressive, when he wants to sat or do something he just does so, he's.....single minded rather like a bull, and goes at situations like a bull who's seen a red rag"

"And what is Jacks red rag?"

Will shuddered and gave a hollow laugh "The Chesapeake Ripper of course!, his Nemesis, the Joker to his Batman, the Lex Luthor to his Superman".

While not being a huge fan of pop culture Hannibal did keep himself aware of popular terms and themes so as to never be caught off guard. Being described a comic book supervillain was both amusing and slightly insulting, though Hannibal knew Will was using this as a metaphor rather than an actual comparrison.

"In such scenarios" he asked allowing himself to continue the analogy for the moment "Whom would your character be?, Lois Lane?, Robin!?",

Now Will laughed outloud "No, no I don't think so, with my luck and instability I would more likely end up as the Joker's Harley Quinn!"

While he smiled and laughed inside Hannibal's beast smirked and purred in agreement to the suggestion and he could not keep from asking the next question

"How would you feel if a man like the Ripper showed an interest in you like the Joker did with Harley Quinn?", Hannibal watched as Will's eyebrows rose and his eyes widdened, his lungs expanding to draw in air to make a vitriolic declaration of how he would be horrified by such a show of affection from a psychopath, but Hannibal was far more interested in the beating pulse in Will's throat, the dilation of his pupils, and the flush on his cheeks, all of which told a far different story than the one spilling from Will's lips.

Yes he would be frightened by arousing the interest of a psychopath and rightly so, only a fool would not be, but he would also be deeply enticed and aroused by the amorous attentions of such a man.

The beast inside Hannibal beamed happily, keen now to start making said intentions known.

Chapter 2

"I love him so much, when I am apart from him I feel as if half of myself is missing, half of myself is lost!", MS Catherine Dale sobbed to an impassive Hannibal, her fat fingers tore at the tissue in her hands and her ill fitting jeggins created a thick bulge from her hips and belly as her flesh spilled over the at least one size too small garment.

The skin tight camisole top strained to contain her bra-less breasts which wobbled with every sob, and her short denim jacket with the false patches on the breast pockets were enough to make Hannibal's sense of style cringe in despair!.

Catherine Dale had been reffered to him from court having been brought up on charges of stalking a man whom she had become obsessed with and had convinced herself that they were in a relationship and would be getting married and having two point five children, a dog and the white picket fence!.

If the stalking, love/poison pen letters, and frequent home invasions hadn't been enough Catherine had also attacked the object of her affections Sister believing that she was his lover and therefore a threat to her relationship.

The poor woman had been beaten baddly spent a week in hospital.

Catherine had been aprehended and once the court psychiatrist had spent some time with her it had been concluded that she was mentally ill and in need of care.

For the first six months she had been remanded to the BSHCI, but as her behavior had been calm she had been released under supervision having to attend group therapy twice a week at the BSHCI and have a weekly session with Hannibal while also staying away from her former obsession.

Something she was clearly struggling with.

De Clérambault's syndrome was what Hannibal diagnosed Catherine with, or Erotomania as it was also called.

He had never treated anyone with this condition before and had briefly been intrigued, wondered if in fact he could manipulate it to his own ends.

However after a month of sessions with Catherine he had lost interest completely and spent most of their sessions in his memory palace or imagining his next kill.

Maybe he should make Will a bouquet?, he could remove the hands and have them clasping the heart between them, holding it forth as they lay on a platter made from the large intestines!.

Surely Will with his gifted mind would be able to understand the meaning of such a display, and it would be both a pleasure and entertaining to watch his reaction to the offering and the

realization of the Rippers interest in him.

"Why can't he love me like I love him!"

Catherines grating voice pulled Hannibal from his throughts irritatingly and for a brief moment he considered disemboweling her and using her organs for his offering to Will!. But he reminded himself it would very difficult to get blood out of the carpet!.

"You are confusing your conditions symptoms with true feelings" Hannibal said to Catherine "You must focus on putting him behind you and moving on with your life"

"But it's so hard!" Catherine wailed "All I want is him!"

Internally Hannibal sighed and sympathised knowing that he felt the same in regards to Will.

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Across the state Will Graham stood at the scene of a massacre.

Abel Gideon had successfully escaped from his escort to court and had killed his guards brutally and decorated the foliage with their intestines.

Gideons was not a mind he wanted to spend very long in, the man was not only insane he was hopelessly confused about who and what he was thanks to that fuckwit Chiltons actions.

The conflicting emotions and thoughts that were bombarding Gideon were like a psychodelic drug and a sledge hammer to the skull for Will making him more than happy to pull himself out and back into the present.

Jack approached and stood besides him gazing at the ornimental organs hanging from the bushes.

"So does Gideon still believe he is the Chesapeake Ripper?" Jack asked in a low voice that was for Wills ears alone and not the assorted members of the FBI collecting information

Unsticking his tongue from the roof of his mouth Will replied to Jack "Abel Gideon is having a difference of opinion about who he is", forcing himself to continue looking at the dangling organs Will swallowed down his nausea and continued to speak, "The man who escaped from that Van was not in the same state of mind as the man who did this".

Shivering a little from the cold Katz came up and reported on what Gideon had stolen, the guns, pepper spray, uniforms etc

Will shook his head "It's more what he didn't take"

Katz glanced to the organs "He hung the organs from the branches using veins which he harvested from his victims!" she stated sounding almost impressed by the skill it had taken to do something like that

"He even tied little bows with some of them!" Price said

"It's pretty impressive!" Zeller dared to add

Impressive? Will silently repeated, more like horrific!, at least the Ripper doesn't leave the organs behind on display with the victims.

He started when Jack replied to this making him realize he'd spoke aloud without knowing it

"Well if he's not the Chesapeake Ripper he's certainly trying to get his attention"

Isn't everyone always trying to get someones attention?, Will wondered tiredly as Katz spoke again

"Local PD found footprints leading out of the woods that match with ones from the crime scene"

"How fresh are they?"

Katz screwed up her face knowing that Jack was hoping Gideon hadn't got far and wished she didn't have to be the one to quash that hope, "Two or three hours at least, and they're headed back towards Baltimore"

Jack sighed and muttered a curse under his breath "Alright lets put out a state wide emergency bulletin about Gideon, set up road blocks, and start canvasing people!" he ordered, he clapped his hands in a "Chop chop" move getting the agents to increase their pace as they worked

"Baltimore" Will murmured continuing to look at the organs and felt his stomach twist and lurch as Zeller cut one free and bagged it.

Letting out a breath and swallowing hard on the bitter taste in his mouth Will turned round before he ended up loosing his breakfast over Katz and shaming himself at the crime scene.

So Gideon was heading back to Baltimore instead of out of state. Guess he likes the city!, Will grimanced instead of smirked at his own little joke and tried to shake himself out of this head space.

Baltimore

Baltimore

Baltimore

Hannibal lives in Baltimore!.

Before he even really knew what he was doing Will was fumbling with his mobile and dialling Hannibal's number.

"Hello?" came the lilting east European accented voice

"Hannibal...." Will stammered suddenly feeling like every single eye at the crime scene was focusing on him and not the remains of several people that were strewn about the area

"Will, what is wrong?" Hannibal asked "Or is this a social call?", he sounded equal parts concerned for Wills health and pleased to have received an unexpected call from him making Will smile in relief

"I'm.....I'm okay it's um.. you that I am concerned about"

"Oh?", Hannibal didn't sound alarmed, in fact he sounded as collected and calm as ever, what did it take to get under the Doctors skin?, was there anything that could ruffle Hannibals feathers at all Will wondered?.
Thinking of feathers reminded Will of Alana saying how peacocks are really stupid birds and he imagined Hannibal as having a huge plumed peacock tail!, if the Doctor was a bird he would certainly be an elaborately decorative one like a peacock!, but would have the intelligence and skill of a falcon, a combination of deadly force and elegant vanity in one.

"Will?"

Hannibal's questioning voice made Will realize he'd been drifting again and he rubbed his forehead with a free hand wishing he had some pain killers

"Uh sorry, it's Abel Gideon, the....would be Chesapeake Ripper, he escaped custody and we think he's heading back into Baltimore"

"I see"

Will felt his cheeks flushing, he had no reason to be telling Hannibal this, not really, he just couldn't help but want to warn Hannibal of the psychopaths escape.

"Just um be careful, he's very dangerous, has killed his guards and ripped them apart with little more than his bare hands!"

"That can't be easy for you to empathize" Hannibal said sounding more concerned for Will than himself, "While we do not have an appointment I think you should come in tonight to discuss this"

Will's eyebrows rose in surprise "Thats um...."

"Will!", Jack's bellow from the car made the Empath turn and nod his head

"I have to go" he said to Hannibal "I'll um try to come by for about eight?"

"I'll be waiting" Hannibal promised "Please take care of yourself"

"Yeah, you too" Will said and ended the call trudging across the snow to Jack

"I want you and Alana Bloom to go to BSHCI and interview Chilton" Jack ordered making Will grimance, "I know he's full of shit but he might have some insight on what Gideon may be planning" Jack said seeing the look on Wills face and sympathizing

"That douche wouldn't know it if a psychopath were straddling his chest and biting off his face!" Will spat "The only thing he's going to be thinking about is how to avoid getting any blame for this attached to him!".

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The visit to the BSHCI proved to be a useless as Will had believed it to be.

He and Alana exchanged insults with Chilton who as Will predicted was passing all blame onto everyone but himself for all of Gideons actions.

Back at the BAU Jack had called all available agents in to find Gideon stressing that he was both armed and extreamly dangerous.

Saddly for the FBI who had been hoping to avoid a state wide panic over this situation Freddie Lounds had already gotten hold of the story and had posted it Online with pictures of Gideon and Will Graham.

The artical read

Doctor of Death VS Chesapeake Ripper?

Abel Gideon a one prominant transplant surgeon turned psychopathic killer has once again opened up the speculation that he may be the Chesapeake Ripper.

On his way to court to face charges of Murder of the Nurse he killed in the BSHCI he managed to escape and slaughtered all four of his guards in a brutal fashion so similar to that of the notorious Chesapeake Ripper one wonders if perhaps he in fact is the mass murderer who as of yet is still at large.

If indeed he is not, then he is most certainly challenging The Ripper for position as most brutal and prolific killer.

What will the reaction from The Ripper be?, and what will the FBI do now they have perhaps two mass murdering psychopaths on the loose?.

It seems dear readers that once again the unstable and damaged Special Agent Will Graham is to be the key to bringing in Abel Gideon.

Is the FBI in fact risking letting a third Psychopath on the loose?.

What?, one wonders do these killers think of having a man just like them hunting them?.

We can only speculate that they must be deeply amused by this reckless act by the FBI and perhaps may think of making use of him like the FBI.

If so then perhaps I am wrong and Will Graham is not a psychopath, he is but a toy to be used by whom ever lays claim on him.

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Will was understandably not best pleased by the artical, something that Hannibal could relate to since he found his own ire rising at Freddie's words.

Not just her mocking of Will and his abilities but also for her daring to question once again if Gideon was in fact the Chesapeake Ripper.

This stung his vanity, his pride and the pride he took in his work, making him sorely tempted to hunt down the vicious journalist and introduce her to The Ripper and leave such a display of her disected corpse that every journalist in the world would be falling over themselves to get the story!.

However Hannibal was old enough and wise enough not to give into impulse and so stayed his hand from slicing Freddie's slender throat open and instead used it to pour Will a glass of wine as the profiler paced his study.

"It's like she wants The Ripper to strike again just to prove he is not Gideon!" Will raged "As if there hasn't been enough bloodshed already!"

"Miss Lounds is reckless in her writing" Hannibal said handing Will his drink and clucking his tongue when Will took a gulp without truly savoring the taste as he should "She is also deeply insulting I think to you"

Will snorted "I'm use to insults"

"That does not mean that they do not still hurt"

Will rose an eyebrow at Hannibal his lips quirking a slight smile "Sticks and Stones Doctor Lecter"

"Words can be a cutting as a blade" Hannibal said acknowledging the old saying with a smile of his own "I would rather you not hide away the wounds they inflict and let them fester into deeper wounds still. It is healthier to speak out and allow yourself to be healed"

Hannibal watched as Will slowly relaxed his shoulders and sank down into one of the leather chairs tipping his head back and exposing the long collum of his throat in a tantalizing display of vulnerable skin that Hannibal wanted to both slice open and cover in kisses

"What is there to say?" Will sighed staring at the ceiling "I'm a freak, I was born a freak, have always been a freak, and will die a freak"

A scowl flittered over Hannibal's brow at Will's self deprecation "You are not a freak" he said a little more crossly than he meant to as Will lifted his head in surprise at the verocity with which he spoke and Hannibal made himself be calm lest he reveal more than he could afford to at this time

"You are simply different to the majority, unique, that makes you special not monsterous"

"Special" Will repeated "I don't feel special, the world doesn't see me as special it sees me as Freddie Lounds describes"

"Then the world is blind" Hannibal said while thinking 'One day Miss Lounds will pay for sins a finger at a time!, then her tongue, then her eyes, and finally her intestines!',
Leaning forward Hannibal risked placing a hand on Wills knee and allowed himself a brief moment of gratification when Will did not flinch or pull away
"I once told you how I see you and that has not changed"

"A fragile tea cup to Jack and Mongoose to you", Will's nose wrinkled "You do know a Mongoose is pretty much a rodent don't you?, I think I should be insulted by that comparison and yet I find it oddly endearing"

"It was meant as a compliment not an insult" Hannibal said not breaking contact and dared risk move his hand a little higher up Will's thigh "Miss Lounds on the other hand is a Snake in the Grass ready to strike whomever passes her by"

"Hm and poison them with her own brand of venom" Will mused

"Indeed but as you are the Mongoose she should be cautious when you come by".

Chapter 3

Abel Gideon was not a fool.

Insane yes.

Dangerous yes.

Somewhat confused as to whom he exactly was certainly.

But a fool no.

He knew that every cop in the county and in fact the country was liable to be searching for him, knew that his face would be plastered over every paper and tv screen in the whole of Maryland until he was aprehended.

Therefore he knew it would not be long before he was caught and if he wanted to extend that measure of time he would have to be cautious in revealing himself and for the most part keep his face hidden from view.

To make sure that he would be able to keep updated on the current news about himself, (And also enjoying reading about himself) Gideon deftly pickpocketed a smart phone from what appeared to be a college student if the smell of stale beer, skin tight ripped jeans, and baggy sweatshirt topped off with one of those over sized floppy fringed hair styles that were so high in fashion were anything to go by.

The young post pubescent was deep in conversation with another equally poorly dressed young man who was munching on crisps from a very large bag and making everyone with a normal metabolizm rather than that of a college boy very envious!.

Gideon went completely unnoticed as he passed them by and lifted the phone which wasn't locked by a pin. Quickly he accessed the internet and made his way to a motel room which he had purchased on the scant dollar bills he'd swiped from the men he'd killed.

He had no fear of the clerk recognizing him, the subhuman had hardly glanced up from his computer screen where he was making no attempts to hide the fact he was watching netflix while supposedly working and had just grabbed the money and tossed Gideon a key to room!.

Safely hidden away in the motel room Gideon connected with WIFI and started to search the net for any and all information about himself and the hunt for him.

Of course all news podcasts, networks, and news pages were running articals about him, his previous kills, and his current escape.

The one that truly caught his eye was Tattlecrime.com and the artical run by Freddie Lounds, the journalist who'd written of his last kill.

Clicking onto the artical Gideon's eyebrows rose as he read her work.

Will Graham featured highly in the artical. That rather odd young man he had met at the BSHCI, Autistic he had almost thought him but was not quite sure he was truly Autistic or Aspergers. An interesting man never the less, and linked with the Ripper it seemed.

"And does the Ripper think of you Mr Graham?" Gideon drawled "Does he have any plans for you while he dances this waltz with Jack Crawford and sends him pieces of past kills?"

Magnifying the image of Will Graham Gideon chuckled and traced the tip of his forefinger down the profile of Will's face
"Perhaps Mr Graham you would make a wonderful topic for discussion with the Ripper" he mused "Or maybe, just maybe something even better!".

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There is nothing quite like home cooking.

The flavours and aromas are always much stronger, much for satisfying than one can find in packaged foods and the exercise of preparing and cooking a meal was one that Hannibal loved at any hour of the day.

That was perhaps why he had no reservations about rising early to cook breakfast for Will and himself and driving out to Wolftrap. He also made sure to pack some sausages for Will's pack of strays since it easily bought him favor with Will's furry guardians.

The sound of barking and a flurry of fur and paws greeted his arrival at the farm house and Hannibal had to wait a moment before he could open the car door and climb out as several of Will's brood ran round the bently barking and sniffing with their tails wagging so hard it was a wonder they didn't come flying off!.

Will himself was sat on the porch sipping coffee from a chipped mug looking adorably dazed and rumpled as if he had just tumbled out of bed and wasn't too sure where he was or what he was doing.

His hair was even wilder than normal, and his long colt like limbs seemed spare and clumsy as he rose from the steps to greet Hannibal who was surounded by very eager and inquisitive canines who could no doubt smell the food upon him.

The smallest of the pack took it upon herself to jump up at him with an excited yip earning her a sharp reprimand from Will who summoned all of them away from Hannibal

"Sorry about that, they're not use to that many visitors"

"It's perfectly fine" Hannibal replied "It's nice to be so enthuseastically welcomed, though I think that it may have more to do with they can smell sausage upon me!"

Will snorted inelegantly "You're bribing them!" he accused without malice and scowled at his pack "Traitors" he accused them as they rubbed about Hannibals legs eagerly sniffing at the food hampers now, Winston and Buster made pathetic whining noises and gave Hannibal eyes that said "We haven't been fed in a month!"

"Come on in" Will offered finishing the last of his coffee and leading the way into the house followed by several dogs, the rest of which followed after Hannibal ina scabbled of paws and barks as they tried to shove past one another in their eagerness to get inside.

Hannibal set the hamper down and opened it taking out the sausage links he had and broke them up throwing them down for the dogs who leaped on them as if they were starving to death!

"You're spoiling them" Will scolded "You'll give them tastes as expensive as your own!"
"Is that a bad thing?", Hannibal gave Will a smile as he scratched the Winstons head and received a licked hand for his efforts

"It is when I won't be able to afford to feed them!" Will said "I hate to think how much those sausages are worth, probably more than is in my entire pantry!"

Hannibal nodded his head "I feared as much so.....", he gestured to the hamper "I came prepared"

Will rolled his eyes "You know if this continues I might think that you are trying to fatten me up!"

Hannibal pretended to give Will a look over though he already knew every inch of the profilers body, could easily estimate his weight and clothing size without needing to apply further scrutiny, however it was always a pleasure to look over Will's body and imagine the flesh beneath the ill fitting cheap attire. How would Will look in a well tailored form fitting suit of Hannibal's choosing?, what shades would suit him most?, blues certainly, greens, light and dark browns.

Only a couple of second had past before Hannibal was looking up again a teasing smile making it's way only his face
"You could do with adding some extra pounds to your frame" he said off handedly as Will went to get plates and cups for Hannibal's breakfast offering, he gave an indignant sounding squark and Hannibal had to dodge a dish cloth as he followed Will into the kitchen

"I am merely concerned for your health" he offered opening the hamper and began to take out the food and set it upon the plates "You need to consume regular protiens, complex carbohydrates, fruits, and vegetables to maintain a healthy and robust body"

"What an day old pizza doesn't count!?" Will protested "Even if it has pineapple on it!?", he grinned at the glower Hannibal sent up "Okay, alright I'll submit to your doctoring or mothering or whatever this is"

"Two friends enjoying breakfast together?"

"I've never had a friend drive for almost two hours just to bring me breakfast", Will set two fresh cups of coffee down on the table and sat down digging into the food and let out an indecent groan "Nore make me food like this!"

"A grave error on their part then"

"You know if I didn't know better I'd think you were courting me" Will said with a relaxed smile and leaned back in his seat to take a drink of coffee for once managing to catch Hannibal completely off guard with the statement, he paused wondering how best to answer this. His pause caught Will's attention and his eyes widdened as he drew his own conclusions. His mouth opened in a comical circular shape as he gazed at Hannibal but anything he had been about to say was lost was his phone rang breaking the moment completely.

As Will rose to answer the phone Hannibal was unsure whether or not to be releaved at the interuption or upset that the moment had been broken, his decision was made a second later when Will spoke

"Jack I'm not running late or anything I'll be in soon"

Upset, definately upset Hannibal decided, Jack Crawford may have done him the favor of introducing him to Will but he was involving himself far too much in Wills life for Hannibal's taste, had too much control over Will, bullied him and guilted him into doing things tastelessly to Hannibal's opinion. Oh Jack believed he was doing it for the best of reasons to hunt down monsters, but wasn't overly troubling himself about the damage his actions were having on Will's mind, a mind that Hannibal was determined to posses and if at anytime it were to be destroyed then he would be the one to destroy it himself.

"Okay, Okay I'll be there!" Will stated "Ninety minutes tops!", with a sigh he hung up and gave Hannibal a sorry expression "Looks like breakfast will have to be cut short"

Hannibal rose an eyebrow "Jack is cracking the whip?"

The inuendo startled a laugh out of Will, "Jack weilding a whip!, thats not an image I really need in my head!", the smile froze on his face an reluctantly he met Hannibal's eyes "About what I said.....before Jack called.....?", he let the unspoken question hang in the air between them like smoke from a cigarette, and drawing in the air like a smoker taking a drag Hannibal made his reply in a monotone

"Yes"

"Yes?" Will repeated "Yes to....." he gestured with his hands and minutely shook his head while studying Hannabil's expression and staring into the incredible and hypnotic maroon depths of his eyes while his own blue orbs widdened once more

"Oh....." was the first word that tumbled from his lips the next two made Hannibal's lips twitch in amusment "Holy Fuck!"

"Should I take that as a positive reaction?" he asked rising from the table aand approaching Will but not getting into his personal space, no need to push things too fast, they were accelorating a little faster than he had thought they would, than he had planned for, but he wasn't going to risk frightening Will off.

"Well it's not a no as such" Will replied with a jittery laugh and ran a hand through his unruly hair "This is.....unexpected to say the least, I wouldn't have thought I was your type"

"What would you have assumed is my type?"

"Uh some society person?, someone upper class who knows what all the forks go with and wears designer clothing rather than stuff from walmart!"

Hannibal did not exactly shake his head but the slight turn and flar of his nostrils made up for the full gesture, "All that is merely window dressing, anyone can wear a tailored suit, anyone can learn refined social graces, and anyone can have wealth and social position. However non of that makes them interesting or alluring to me"

"Alluring?", Will's lips curved into not quite a smile but the surprised and deeply flattered shine in his eyes was just as pleasing, perhaps even more so, "I don't think anyones ever described me as alluring"

"You are" Hannibal breathed closing the distance between them "You are like a spring flower peaking up out winters frosts, a promise of better, warmer times to come", taking a chance he cupped Will's cheek and was gratified as Will turned into the touch "A reminder that winter will end and that the spring will come"

Will's eyelids lowered a little, his breath was warm against Hannibal's hand tickling the nerves and send a wonderful sensation up his arm.

Perhaps things would have progressed further, maybe they would have ventured into their first kiss but at that moment the phone rang again making both men groan though only Will outloud and he tipped his head forward to rest it on Hannibal's chest
"Murder is always a crime right?" he asked making Hannibal chuckle

"I believe so"

"Then I guess Jack gets to live another day" Will sighed standing up straight "Though if he keeps on calling like this I make no promises in regards to maiming!", reluctantly he moved away from Hannibal to answer the phone walking away into the living room, sighing deeply Hannibal glanced at the half eaten food and shook his head murmuring under his breath

"If these interuptions continue I make no promises in regards to his health at all!".

Chapter 4

Freddie Lounds was quite use to receiving phone calls from people she didn't know, quite often she received tips from people who wished to remain anonymous asides from giving over billing information so they could be paid for their tips.

So when he phone rang and the number wasn't one she recognized Freddie was neither alarmed or surprised but intrigued and with Gideon on the loose she was hoping for a tip on another gory murder scene.

She was briefly dissapointed when the caller indentified themselves as psychologist Paul Caruthers but she perked up at the mention of cowriting a paper on Gideon, on getting an inside scoop on his profile which Caruthers had worked on having had several sessions with Gideon during his time at the BSHCI.

While she could very easily get a profile from Dr Dickface Chilton Freddie would rather have someone with less ego and more intellect to work with!, she might be an opportunist but she was not an idiot!.

Quite happily Freddie went to Caruthers office after his surgery had finished to interview him and begin the process of writing the paper of Gideon.

Her happiness however died a very quick death when she was treated to the horrific sight of Abel Gideon standing behind the exsanguinated body of Dr Paul Caruthers with his tongue sliced out and laid over his neck.

"Miss Lounds so good of you to join us!" Gideon greeted sounding as if they were about to sit down for coffee rather than standing in the middle of a murder scene!
"I read in one of your articles that the Chesapeake Ripper used victims tongue as a book marker in a bible" he said arranging the tongue so it lay flat instead of curling up as it was trying to, "They call this the Columbian neck tie" he informed her, he smiled and gazed at Freddie, at the fear on her face and the ravenous hunger in her eyes.

Oh she was scared, only a fool would not be afraid in such a situation, but she was also thinking of how she could benefit from this situation. This could be a huge scoop for her, she could make a massive story from this and she'd be getting the details first hand before anyone else had seen or touched anything.

Gideon could practically see the dollar signs lighting up in Freddie's eyes and chuckled
"I think we can help each other Miss Lounds"

Freddie started and swallowed hard having to shake herself out of her frozen state.

"How is that?" she asked her voice high pitched than normal with her fear

Gideon smiled coldly and approached Freddie a wicked gleam shining in his eyes "I want you to tell me about Will Graham" he said staring Freddie directly in the eyes "I need information on him"

"What kind of information?" Freddie asked her fingers itching for her camera to start snapping pictures of the scene

"Oh nothing much...." Gideon said "Just his routines, current address, that kind of thing"

Freddie swallowed hard, "You.....you're going to.....k..kill Will Graham?" she whispered her face paling

Gideon sighed and scratched a phantom itch on the back of his head "What I do or do not do to Mr Graham is non of your concern miss Lounds, what you should be concerned with is making the very best article of Dr Caruthers death, and out doing yourself with it's successor"

"Successor?", Freddie frowned not understanding

"Yes" Gideon replied "The article of Mr Graham's abduction of course!", he smiled and lay he hands on Freddie's shoulders making her flinch "And Miss Lounds I expect both articles to be front page material or I will be very upset"

Freddie glanced at the cooling body of Caruther and felt her mouth go dry, drawing in a breath she nodded her head feeling as if she were making a deal with the Devil himself

"Excelent!" Gideon declared letting go of her shoulders and gestured to Caruthers "Please" he said "Get started right away"

Some what shakily Freddie drew out her camera and began to take pictures while trying to quiet her conscience in regards to Will Graham, she told herself that Will was a grown man an ex cop who knew how to take care of himself, that he had as much chance of defeating Gideon in a fight as Gideon did him, that she could do nothing to help him and that it wasn't really up to her to do so, after all what was she to do, should she risk her own life for his?. No what she was doing was the best choice she could make, and if the worst did happen then she could at least give Will the best eulogy ever written!.

****

Finding the corpse of Doctor Caruthers did nothing to improve Jacks mood.

Gideon had not only gone and cut Caruthers tongue from his head he had exsanguinated him completely into medical blood carrying bags which he had requested be sent to the red cross!.

"He's peacocking for the Ripper!" Jack spat in both annoyance and disgust

"It's like flowers and chocolate for the first date!" Will said without amusment "It's his version of flirting with the Ripper", a frown flitted over his brow and he lent forward seeing something clasped in Caruthers hand.

It was a remote for his computer, clicking the button Will turned the PC on and a Tattlecrime article came up documenting Caruthers murder with images that had to have been taken at the crime scene.

"How is this news already?" Jack asked to shocked for the minute to feel fury at Freddie Lounds though he would no doubt be feeling it very soon!

Zellar piped up with a suggestion "Some one from the Baltimore PD must have taken a picture on their phone and sent it to Tattlecrime"

Narrowing his eyes at the picture Jack scowled "The photo was taken before the blood was put on ice, Gideon was still here!"

A sick realization ran through Will at this and he spoke in slow toneless voice "He has Freddie Lounds"

"Why?" Katz asked "What would he want with her?"

Will gestured to the screen "He wants fame, he wants everyone to know what he's doing, he wants to make sure that the Ripper knows what he's doing and is hoping that he will be impressed enough to have a face to face with him"

"And will he?" Jack asked making Will jerk towards him in surprise "Will the Ripper be impressed by all this, be flattered?"

Will drew in a breath and thought hard about the Ripper, about what he had felt from the Ripper. The man liked the attention, the glory, he enjoyed the media spot light and while he might appreciate Gideon's overture of carnage being done in homage to him he would not forgive Gideon trying to claim his work, and nore would he take kindly to Gideon taking the spotlight away from him. So if a meeting did take place between them it would not go well, in fact Will suspected that Gideon himself would not walk away from it at all.

He shook his head at Jack and pursed his lips "If Gideon does get his wish and meet the Ripper then the Ripper will kill him, slowly and in an inventive horrific way to punish him for daring to try and make himself the Ripper and take away his lime light"

"Huh!" Zellar murmured "I'm not sure I'm overly upset at that!"

Price nodded his head "A homocidel lunatic killing another homocidel lunatic isn't that heart breaking"

"The Ripper is not a lunatic!" Will said with such heat in his voice it surprised even himself "The Ripper is entirely sane" he said in a calmer tone "He knows exactly what he is doing and why he is doing it and that is what makes him so very dangerous. Because he is completely unpredictable".

"Uh huh" Jack murmured "Unpredictable or not I want continued twenty four hour protection on all of Gideon's former shrinks, if he is targeting them then I doubt he'll stop here and God

only knows what he'll do to the next one to try and attract the Rippers attention, or what the Ripper may do in retaliation"

"You're right" Will whispered staring at Caruthers "This was just the warm up act, Gideon is still setting the stage for his master piece, still pulling back the curtains and bringing out all the props so he can make sure that when he is ready he will have a show worthy of perfection for the Ripper".

****

Unpredictable the Ripper maybe but Hannibal was predictable in some things, and that was not wanting to share the spotlight with a pretender to his blood soaked throne.

He read Freddie's article with a stoney expression and growing anger inside him.

Flattery Gideon maybe attempting with this piece of macarbre theatre but Hannibal did not feel flattered so much as mocked and challenged, these were not feelings he wanted to long entertain anymore than he wanted to share the spotlight with this upstart.

He needed to take care of Abel Gideon and fast, needed to teach him the err of his ways and maybe....., Hannibal smiled darkly, maybe use him to show Will just how truly special he really was!.

Turning off his tablet Hannibal went to his contact records and began to flip through them until he found what he was looking for.

Doctor Carson Nahn

He had attended Gideon during his stay at the BSHCI and done a paper on him, the same study that Alana Bloom had worked on in fact.

Hannibal smiled toying with the idea of killing Alana instead of Nahn, while he knew it would get attention, a lot of attention and it would stop her from making Will feel as if he were unworthy with her constant statements of thinking him too unstable or too fragile for a relationship it would also send Will spiraling into grief and while Hannibal could manipulate that vulnerablity he would rather Will were relatively happy, for now anyway, after all he could always kill Alana later!.

Yes Nahn would serve perfectly for what he was planning, both as a gesture to Gideon and to Jack if he were bright enough to understand it.

****

Wolftrap

Will was beyond exhausted as he pulled into his drive and turned off the engine.

Jack had continued to push him for answer, theorys, hell even predictions on what Gideon and the Ripper were going to do next until the point that Will had felt like his head would explode!.

It had taken Will nearly collapsing with exhaustion for Jack to finally allow him to go home and get some rest with pack.

Speaking of the seven mutts he kept he could hear them whining and barking as if they were upset about something.

Scowling he got out of the car and headed to the house, he had just stepped up onto the porch when the back of his head was struck hard with a baton.

He fell face first onto the porch with blood dripping onto his collar from the split in his scalp.

"Is he alive?" Freddie asked anxiously

"Of course!" Gideon said "He needs to be alive right up to the last moment", he gestured to Freddie getting her to take photos of Will's prone form on his porch, then he lifted Will up over his shoulder in a firemans carry

"I trust you do not need any further input from me to know what to do?" he asked looking Freddie over, she was tied by the wrist and the ankle to the porch with rope to the to keep her from leaving. Will had not been able to see her from the angle he had been coming from but she now had a perfect view of his slumped form and took several shots with her camera to post on line.

"Of course not Dr Gideon" She replied to his question "It's been a pleasure working with you", she offered him a charming toothy grin

Gideon huffed a laugh and picked Will up in a firemans carry "I'll look forward to your atricle Miss Lounds" he said and headed for the car he had jacked, tossing Will in the boot he went round front, got in and drove away leaving Freddie to work on her article and shiver in the cold.

Hopefully Jack would see the article soon and come and get her because Freddie really wasn't looking forward to spending the whole night on Will's porch in the snow!.

Chapter 5

Will's abduction did not become known until he had been missing for nearly a full day!.

This was not something that Freddie Lounds appreciated since she was stuck on Will's porch freezing her arse off as she waited to be freed from the remarkably well tied restraints Gideon had left her in.

She was able to walk a few paces back and forth on the porch which allowed her to keep her blood circulating and prevent full hypothermia from setting in but she was still not happy in the least and was more than ready for the FBI to finally show up and save her.

Ironically it was Hannibal's bait for the FBI that delayed them in realizing Will was missing.

His slaying of fellow Psychiatrist Nahn kept Jack and the team too busy to notice that anything was wrong straight away.

Jack had of course called Will a dozen times demanding that he get his arse to the BAU but had received no reply from his Empath and was too stressed with the missing Gideon to be appropriately concerned.

Will was of course in the clutches on Abel Gideon who had decided to use the observatory where Miriam Lass's arm was discovered after The Ripper had left it there for Jack to find.

Will had come too after an hour tied to a gurney with the sound of Gideon whistling as he bustled about.

Will let out whimper and tried to sit up, a reflexive action but he got no where, he was strapped down by his chest, thighs, and shins, and this wrists were both bound by ropes as an additional restraint preventing him from rising more than a quarter of an inch from the metal bed he lay upon.

His movement attracted Gideon who stoped whistling and sauntered over to him patting Will's face with his palm
"Nice to see you're awake at last Mr Graham" he said grinning widely "May I call you Will?, I think I should be allowed to call you Will considering the closeness of our relationship"

Will took a shuddering breath trying to remain calm inspite of the situation, panicking was not going to help at all so he needed to remain calm.

"Is our relationship close?" he asked Gideon trying to keep his voice steady and not let fear creep into it. By sheer force of will he kept from flinching as Gideon's face leered close to his own and the deranged surgeons breath ghosted over his skin

"We are going to be very close indeed Will" he said leaning forward even more so his lips were just a hairs bredth from touch Will's, "You are to be my compass from which I will find my path, you will be my guide, and most importantly my offering", Gideon's lips pursed as if he were going to kiss Will then he moved away and began to whistle one more.

Will let out breath he hadn't realized he'd been holding, "An offering?" he asked

"Yes" Gideon said cheerfully "In all ancient beliefs they gave offerings to the Gods, either as gifts to bless their crops or to beget Sons on their wives, or to appease their Gods wrath and prevent a disastor from happening", Gideon stopped at the foot of Will's gurney and patted his leg like one would a dog
"The Chesapeake Ripper may well be the God of serial killers and so he should be gifted a suitable offering and I can think of no one better than your good self to be sacrifice"

Will shuddered and closed his eyes trying to recall prayers from Sunday Mass in his youth but his mind ran blank as it registered absalute terror.

The Chesapeake Ripper was a monster, who wanted to be an artist and used the pieces of victims bodies to be his tools for his art.

If Gideon was going to make him a sacrifical offering for the Ripper then Will could expect to be in for a world of pain and horror before he was finally granted the peace of death.

"Now!" Gideon said clapping his hands "I need to run a few errands before we can get started!", he grinned at Will "Did you know Mr Graham it is so easy to get in and out of hospital supply rooms?, if you are wearing scrubs and a white coat then no one looks at you twice"

He thumped the table making Will yelp as his head was rattled, "You just lay here and I'll be right back before you know it!"

"Please" Will said shakily "Take your time!"

Gideon laughed "I do admire your wit Will" he said "I'll enjoy more of it once I get everything we need, and I'll thoroughly enjoy removing your organs and laying them out for the Ripper", he patted Will on the cheek in a goodbye gesture "You have a pleasent time while I'm gone now!, feel free to get some sleep!, it's not like this place has cable after all!".

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BAU

Suspecting that Will was being hold up by Jack at the BAU investigating the murder of Nahn, Hannibal drove over with the notion of offering a second opinion to hurry the investigation along.

While he had no doubt that Will would eventually understand what the amputation of Nahn's arm meant he was not prepared to wait for any longer than absalutely necessary.

Since the unexpected rapid change in their relationship Hannibal was keen to get Will to himself once more and to do that he needed to get rid of distractions like Gideon, so Hannibal intended to aid in the apprehention or if it came to it the illimination of the deranged Doctor.

Being known at the BAU now Hannibal was handing his visitors ID and directed to Jack's domain without more than a cursory patting down by the security and was soon in the morgue where Jack, his team, and Alana were discussing the case over the bodies of Caruthers and Nahn.

"Doctor Lecter an unexpected but very welcome surprise" Jack greeted "Please join us we're rather at a loss here and could use a fresh pair of eyes"

"Then I am more than happy to offer my services" Hannibal replied congenially "Good evening Alana"

"Hannibal" Alana acknowledged

A frown flitted over Hannibal's forehead and he glanced around "Is Will not joining us?" he asked

Zeller made a groaning noise and Price averted his gaze conspicuously, the two of them clearly looked to be drawing themselves out of any potential line of fire.

Katz scowled at them and answered Hannibal, "Will's curently MIA, has been all day"

"Really?", Hannibal kept his features perfectly calm not giving any hint to sudden sparks of worry that flaired within him, going MIA was not like Will, he might not be the most punctual of men and did on occaision happen to be absent minded but he was not prone to going missing like this.

"He looked like shit yesterday" Zellar offered "Nearly passed out last night he probably just took to his bed to recharge"

"He can recharge on his own time!" Jack grunted "Call him again and tell him to get his skinny arse here or I'll send a couple of agents over to drag him here in his skivvys!"

Katz snickered "That'd be a sight for sure!"

"I'll call him" Alana said taking out her phone and stepping aside so Hannibal to examin the bodies under Jacks direction, he paid no heed to what Jack was saying, he had no need to, instead his mind was working over the possable reasons for Wills sudden absence, one of his

dogs could have taken ill and Will could be at the vets, he could have gone down with a sudden stomach upset and be stuck running to the bathroom to releave himself and so wasn't answering Jacks calls, and most worryingly of all he could be in serious trouble.

"Why cut of Nahns arm?" Jack said "It doesn't make sense"

"It may make sense to Gideon" Hannibal replied distractedly "Perhaps he felt that because Nahn had used that hand to write about him he deserved to loose it along with his tongue"

"Makes you wonder what he intends to do next" Price muttered, before anyone could respond to that Alana hurried back into the lab from stepping out into the hall

"I couldn't reach Will but one of my students set me a text about a Tattlecrime posting" she said and held out her phone to Jack to show him the article by Freddie Lounds detailing Will's abduction complete with pictures of him unconscious on his own front porch!

"Jesus Christ Gideon's got Will!" Jack snarled

"Why?, what would he want with Will?" Zellar cried "He's not a shrink!", he yelped when Katz kicked his ankle and then at her nod in Hannibals direction offered a meek appology for use of the word shrink

Hannibal however was paying little notice to Jacks minons as his sharp mind moved fast to figure out what it was Gideon was intending to do with Will and what he could do to prevent it.

"Freddie Lounds" Jack said as he punched numbers into his phone summoning a swat team together to go over to Will's house "Thast article of hers declaring Will a toy, I'll bet that attracted him to Will"

"Very likely" Hannibal agreed

Jack paused and looked the Doctor up and down "I think it may be best if you.....head home Doctor and wait for news, I have no idea of what we might be walking into"

Hannibal could hardly keep the smile off his face, he had no intentions of having Jack hanging on his coat tails after all so this was perfect for him to make his departure
"Of course" he said gracefully

"Alana I want you to go home under guard too" Jack ordered "Katz, Zellar, Price, lets get to Wofltrap".

As Jack and the team left Alana aproached Hannibal her face pale and drawn with worry
"What do you think Gideon will do to Will?" she asked looking to the bodies and shuddering

"I would rather not speculate Alana" Hannibal replied keen now to get on the road himself
"But Will is a survivor, I do not believe that he will fail to survive this"

Alana nodded and offered a weak smile "I hope you're right".

****

Will really wasn't sure what was more terrifying, the sight of Gideon holding a stolen scalpol from whatever hospital he had robbed and the prospect of being sliced open while he was conscious, or listening to Gideon talk about how using a local anisthetic was better than a general so the patient would be awake to witness what was being done, something Will was experiancing right now.

While the local anesthetic had numbed him somewhat in the abdominal area he was not completely without sensation so when the scalpol was pressed into his flesh and drawn down his abdomen he felt the seperation of his flesh and the flow of blood over his skin as it was parted.

Had Will anything in his stomach he would certainly have vomited at the sight of his abdomen being carved open like a sunday roast but as it was his stomach was empty having been starved for nearly a day and was unable to do anything dry heave as his stomach lurched in reflex to what his eyes saw.

"It is amazing just how many organs the human body can offer up before it begins to suffer you know?" Gideon said as he split open the peritinial sack exposing the organs beneath and neatly removed Will's spleen without any hesitation, he held it up for Will to see and chuckled as his eyes rolled back and he slipped into a faint

"Come on now Will!" he encouraged slapping his cheek with a bloody hand "Theres lots more to do yet"

Feeling sick and dizzy Will came round and watched with morbid fascination as Gideon reached into his abdomen and began to extract his large intestine.....

Chapter 6

Hannibal had no real clear plan when he drove away from the BAU, or at least not one beyond getting to where he believed Gideon was holding Will and saving his empath from the lunatic who had dared try and take him from Hannibal.

As plans went that was rather weak and lacking in details but he was having to think on his feet right now and was confident in his ability to be able to figure things out as he went along.

The drive to the observatory took far longer than Hannibal would have liked and he had to waste some time in pulling on his plastic suit to cover his bespoke along the way.

However as he drew close to the observatory he stopped his car and took the rest of the way on foot not wanting to spook Gideon by the sound of a vehicle driving up.

Snow was falling as he made his way which would help cover his tracks if that became necessary but Hannibal was not overly concerned with such a thing right now, he was far more intent on getting to Will to care about finer details which could be dealt with later.

The front door to the observatory was not locked when Hannibal tried it, clearly Gideon was not worried about being caught, far from it in fact, he was after all hoping to meet the Ripper.

Little did he know that his wish was about to be granted and that he was going to pay the price for it.

Hannibal had only taken a few steps inside the Observatory when a voice called out a greeting to him.

“Welcome, please do come in and make yourself comfortable”

Hannibal paused momentarily and chose not to make any verbal reply as he continued to walk deeper into the observatory.

There were no lights on save for the powerful white surgical lamps behind a surgical curtain and they created a shadow of a body on a gurney.

The thick pungent scent of blood was heavy in the air and filling Hannibal’s nose as he walked quicker now towards the surgical curtain which he drew back with a single sweep of his arm and revealed a horror that for a moment robbed him of his composure.

Will was laying strapped down to the gurney with skin an alarming pasty grey and covered in a fine sheen of sweat that gathered about his blue tinged lips in tiny droplets.
Will's mouth was open as he took breaths with obvious effort, fighting to stay alive despite the horrific injury he had suffered.

An injury that even made Hannibal's hardened stomach turn over!.

Will's entire abdomen had been opened up and emptied out!.

His spleen, kidneys, and liver lay in a bundle inside a metal dish that was laying on his lap and had been obscenely "Gift wrapped" with Will's large intestine that had been pulled from his gut and unravelled to be used as gift wrap and twine.

His pancreas, stomach, gallbladder, and bladder had also been removed and were strewn "Decoratively" about the "Gift basket" in Will's lap like small Easter Eggs about a large Chocolate Egg!.

A glance inside the hollowed out cavity of Will's abdomen showed pooling blood from over stressed blood vessels and Hannibal did not all like the look of the clamp of Will's aorta which did not look in the least bit stable to say nothing of the IVC!.
"A beautiful sight no?"

Gideon's voice startled Hannibal out of his frozen state and he briefly met Will's sunken shadowed eyes while silently begged him, though what he was begging for Hannibal could not be certain, for Hannibal to save him?, or to save himself from Gideon?. Knowing Will's penchant for being a martyr it was more likely the latter than the former and while Hannibal appreciated the concern over his well being he had no intentions of becoming another of Gideon's victims, far from it in fact since he intended for Gideon to become one of his.

With extreme effort Will tried to make himself speak, his mouth forming the words that croaked from his throat in a strained whisper

"Hannibal…….get…….help!"

"I must confess your work has inspired my own" Gideon said coming to stand besides Hannibal and look down on Will who's pleading gaze changed to one of fear at the sight of the man who had gutted him like a fish

"I have so longed to meet you" Gideon said "Since that quack Chilton made me think I was you I have become rather obsessed with you, with wanting to meet you in person"

"And you thought the best way to attract my attention was to attack Will Graham?" Hannibal asked keeping his voice neutral so he wouldn't betray the rage building inside him.

It was unclear if Will knew he was The Ripper or had simply been summoned here to become another of Gideon's Psychiatrist victims and considering the state he was in right now he wasn't really capable of coherent thought as he was having to fight to take every laboured breath so he may not have even registered the fact Hannibal was dressed in a plastic suit.

“Hmm it did seem the most logical choice” Gideon said giving Hannibal a bright smile, with a twirl of his hands he produced a fresh scalpel and broke the protective seal from it holding the lethal blade aloft in the light.

Will stiffened and made a whimpering sound He saw the blade held out,

“I thought you might enjoy finishing this yourself” Gideon said turning the handle of the blade to Hannibal “I’ve left the heart and the Lungs for you to extract”

Hannibal took hold of the scalpel in a well trained hand and gave Gideon a small smile “Thank you I will certainly enjoy doing so”.

With a speed that was almost blinding he thrust the scalpel into Gideon’s chest just below the breast bone and ripped it straight up the sternum with such force that when it broke out of the skin it sliced open Gideon’s chin as it arched up spraying Hannibal’s face in blood!.

Open mouthed with shock Gideon fell back clutching at his profusely bleeding chest and stumbled into the curtain bringing it crashing to the ground as he toppled down himself hissing with pain and trying to back away on the balls of his feet, backside and free hand.

Hannibal stalked towards him his maroon eyes alight with blood lust and face dark with anger

“You have behaved very wrongly Dr Gideon” he said “It’s rude to touch what does not belong to you, and ruder still to damage other peoples property, for that you must be punished!”

“Punished!” Gideon spat lashing out at Hannibal and trying to kick him with his right foot only to have said foot caught in an unyielding grasp and the tendons sliced through right the way down to the bone rendering the leg useless!.

Gideon roared with pain and abandoned any further attempt at injuring Hannibal focusing now on trying to save himself if he possibly could.

Turning over onto his front he began to try and crawl away dragging his damaged leg behind him and leaving a thick trail of blood as he went from the deep gnash in his chest.

Hannibal had no need to hurry to catch up to him though, he was in front of Gideon within a few paces and brought the scalpel down between Gideon’s vertebra severing the nerves enough to render his limbs useless but not enough so he wouldn’t be able to feel what was yet to come.

Turning him over Hannibal looked down at Gideon with disdain, “You brought this on yourself Dr Gideon” he stated kneeling besides him and wishing he had more time available to him so he might enjoy this more, but Will needed his attention so he would have to be swift, which didn’t necessarily mean he couldn’t cause Gideon agony even if he were quick about things.

Placing the scalpel back onto Gideon's chest Hannibal made a swift deep horizontal incision across Gideon's chest and tore open his chest, spread apart the ribs with his hands to get to his Heart which was pounding in terror.

"Well" Hannibal said looking Gideon in the eyes as his hands wrapped about the other mans heart "You did say you were leaving the heart and lungs for me!"

"See you in hell!" Gideon hissed meeting Hannibal's gaze determinedly as his heart was unceremoniously removed from his body and held before him by Hannibal.

Astonishingly Gideon managed a few seconds of continued life without his heart before succumbing to death with the sight of his own bloody heart laying in the hands on his murderer!.

With equal swiftness and skill Hannibal spread the rest of the ribs and removed the lungs from Gideon's body and let them lay upon his corpse for the moment where they could remain without risking the meat going off too much since the temperature in the observatory was barely above freezing, and as it was Gideon's own organs and blood there was no risk of cross contamination.

Stripping off the black plastic gloves he was wearing and pushing them into his plastic suits pocket Hannibal went back over to Will who's condition had deteriorated further while he and Gideon had been fighting.

"Han…Hanni…bal!" he managed to stammer panting shallow breaths

"Just stay still and try to stay calm" Hannibal instructed surveying the mess of Will's organs and the amount of blood collecting in the space of his abdomen, at least Gideon had known how to remove organs properly and had not ruptured them in doing so which at least in theory would make replacing them possible, but it depended on whether or not blood supply could be restored and if the organs would survive their removal and replacement.

Will's large intestine was not looking good, the lack of blood supply was starting to show, and his spleen had pretty much had it!, Kidneys and Liver?, with any luck he might be able to get them back inside Will.

Grabbing a pair or surgical gloves from the pack that Gideon had stolen from whatever hospital he'd taken the rest of the equipment from Hannibal set to work grabbing swabs to soak up the blood in Will's belly so he could start to put the organs back inside him

"Dying……., Hani……'m dying!" Will gasped staring at Hannibal with a single tear rolling down his cheek

"You will not die here Will" Hannibal sternly told him soaking up the blood "I will not allow it"

"S'okay 'm'not scared" Will panted out "Does…….doesn't hurt……'nymore"

Hannibal drew in a sharp breath, this was not a good sign, nor was that faint rattle in Will's chest, he had heard death rattles before and knew what it meant but was not prepared to accept it, not this time, not with Will.

"Will you have to stay focused" he ordered carefully taking the left kidney from the dish and laying it back into Will's abdomen "Stay awake, focus on your breathing, on the sound of my voice, do not let yourself fall asleep!"

Will's eyelids were fluttering and his breathing was growing worse as he slowly but surely slipped a little further away.

Pursing his lips Hannibal slapped the side of Will's cheek to rouse him and keep him from slipping into a dangerous sleep
"Come on Will stay with me!" he ordered turning back to the kidney and starting the reconnect it to the IVC, taking great care not to strain the artery or damage the Common iliac arteries as he worked,

As soon as he could he planned to get Will's aorta unclamped and get blood flowing into these organs but with the amount already lost Will could not afford to loose anymore and so would have to clamp the iliac arteries to keep the blood in the abdomen where it was needed most.

"Ripper!"

Hannibal paused as he went to get Will's Liver from the dish being very careful with it lest he risk damaging the already stressed organ and replaced it inside Will to begin connecting it

"What about the Ripper?" he asked ignoring the instinct inside him that screamed for him to put an end to this threat to him and listened instead to his heart that implored him to do whatever it took to save Will's life

"You!" Will rasped and chocked on a laugh "Killer…..saving me!.....", another cough "Ironic!"

Hannibal had nothing to say to that and instead focused on the task at hand, cursing under his breath as the sack containing the liver began to bleed, grabbing a swab he pushed it against the liver hoping to staunch the bleeding long enough for it to be repaired by a hepatobiliary surgeon

"Won't tell" Will whispered sounding very faint, too faint for Hannibal's liking,
"You.....try……save me.."

"I'm going to save you Will" Hannibal corrected going for the other kidney "You just need to keep fighting"

Will gave him a faint smile that was little more than a twitch of his blue lips "Save yourself" he whispered "Don't……..worry…….'bout me!"

Hannibal returned the smile in kind and had he been able would have cupped Will's cheek and rubbed his thumb over it, "It is my pleasure to worry about you Will, and to love you, both of which I will never cease to do".

Twenty minutes later Hannibal had stuffed Gideon's organs and his plastic suit into the hidden compartment in his Bentley and had made a phone call to himself from the phone he had found on Gideon making it seem as if he had been invited to the observatory.

He drove his car up to the Observatory now and went back inside to continue caring for Will.

He had managed to place all the organs back inside Will and connect them to the best of his abilities considering the lack of equipment and aid he had but had not been able to take Will off the aortic clamp as he had begun to bleed out from his liver, right kidney, and several places in his large intestine forcing Hannibal to reclamp lest he loose him to blood loss.

Will had finally passed out and breathing harshly enough that Hannibal took the manual ventilator and connected it to Will so he could aid his breathing and keep him alive.

Putting his mobile on speaker Hannibal dialled Jack as he worked the ventilator with one hand and took Wills pulse with the other, far too rapid and thready.

"Dr Lecter?" Jack greeted sounding stressed

"Jack come to the Observatory where Miriam Lass's arm was found" Hannibal said "I've found Will and he needs urgent medical attention," Hannibal paused looking at Will's discoloured organs, much longer and they would be useless, "Get an air ambulance, he needs to be in surgery NOW!"

"On our way Dr Lecter" Jack said his voice distorted as he clearly spoke on the move "We'll be there as fast as we can".

The phone call was disconnected and Hannibal was able to focus all his attention on Will and slipped his free hand into one of Will's which he had freed from restraints
"Hold on My Mongoose" he whispered "Help is on the way now".

Chapter 7

Wolftrap

“It’s about damn time!”

This was the greeting Freddie Lounds gave to the FBI as they pulled up outside Will’s house and hurried out of the cars to start processing the scene and free Freddie from the restraints Gideon had bound her with, rather impressively too.

“I’ve been freezing my ass off here for a whole day Jack!” she complained “Those damn dogs won’t shut up whining and barking, I’m hungry, thirsty and I need the damn toilet!”

Jack showed her no sympathy, instead he nodded to Zeller who took a bit too much pleasure in binding her wrists behind her back!

“Hey what the hell!” Freddie cried in protest

“For all I know Miss Lounds you have been aiding an abetting a wanted fugitive, assisted in the Murder of Doctor Paul Caruthers, and the Kidnap of Will Graham!” Jack said, he knew it wasn’t true, Freddie was manipulative, was opportunistic but she wouldn’t go so far as to break such massive laws or assist in the murder of someone, however making her nervous generally guaranteed her honesty and right now he needed that, not some twisted game in order for her to get a front page spread.

“I didn’t, I was kidnapped!” Freddie protested helplessly

“Theres no sign of Will” Price called from the house, Will’s Mutts were now running about in the snow, relieving themselves and barking loudly with obvious agitation, their master was missing and there were upset about it.

“Theres fresh blood on the porch steps” Katz said “It could be Wills”

“It is Wills you idiot!” Freddie spat at her and yelped as Zeller jerked her arms sharply, “Gideon knocked him out cold and then took off with him, I don’t know where”

“What was he planning on doing to Will?” Jack demanded

Freddie shrugs “Using him to lure the Ripper, figured he’d be the perfect bait”

Jacks nodded his making a humming noise in his throat and glared at Freddie “I wonder why he thought that, couldn’t possibly have anything to do with the shit you write on that blog!”

“Hey I am not responsible for this!” Freddie cried “I’m as much a victim as Will Graham!”

“Are you?” Jack sneered at her “Funny because you look in awfully good shape for a victim”

Freddie glared back at him and struggled against Zellers grip on her “Will you at least let me go to the toilet?” she snapped “I’m about to piss myself and if that happens I’ll do it on your shoes Jack Crawford!”

Tempting as it might be to have Freddie shame herself Jack had no desire to try and clean piss off his shoes so he nodded for Zeller and Katz to take her to use Will’s bathroom, under Katz’s observation of course, after all until he was certain she wasn’t aiding Gideon at all she was still a suspect!.

The FBI processed the scene as fast as they could, trying to find something, anything to help give them a lead on where Gideon might have gone with Will.
Images of Will with his tongue cut out impaled on shards of metal filled Jacks mind as he paced barking orders and demanding answers.

The Ripper would kill Gideon for daring to take credit for his work, even Will had said that and Jack was confident this was the truth and he couldn’t say he was upset that the Doctor would be killed. Hell at least the Tax Payers would be spared the expense of his continued incarceration at the BSHCI!.

It was what the Ripper may do to Will that bothered Jack.

Was he likely to let Will live?, no of course not, he wouldn’t allow such a threat to his identity go free and the fact Will was part of the team hunting him he may just feel inclined to make Will a special spectacle.

The thoughts of what The Ripper might do to Will turned Jacks stomach, even having his tongue cut out and his body impaled on shards of metal would be a better fate than anything the Ripper could devise to do to him!.

His mobile phone ringing startled him and he answered it hardly pausing to look at the caller ID

“Doctor Lecter…?”

“Jack come to the Observatory where Miriam Lass’s arm was found” Hannibal said without pleasantries “I’ve found Will and he needs urgent medical attention, Get an air ambulance, he needs to be in surgery NOW!”

Jack felt a second of elation at Hannibal’s telling him he’s found Will but that second disappears far to fast as Hannibal told him the severity of Will’s condition, even without details Jack could easily imagine many terrible life threating injuries Gideon could have given Will.

Assuring Hannibal that they would be there as fast as they could Jack ended the call and bellowed for his team
“Doctor Lecters found Will, he’s at the observatory, He needs an Air Ambulance, get one there NOW!”

In other circumstances Jack would have been amused at the sight of the agents scurrying around like headless chickens from his yelling at them but right now all he can think of his getting to Will and seeing for himself just whats been done to him.

Observatory

The air ambulance arrived within twenty minutes of Hannibal calling Jack complete with EMT's and a Trauma Surgeon to assess the situation and make Will stable enough to travel from the observatory to the nearest Hospital with an landing bay.

"Blood pressure is eighty over unreadable" Hannibal reported "Pulse is weak and arrhythmic"

"How long has he been intubated?" the surgeon asked

"Twenty five minutes, and he's been unconscious for thirty"

The EMT takes down the information while the Surgeon assessed Will's grievous injuries, grimacing as he did so

"How long the aortic clamp been in place?" he asked glancing at Hannibal

"I can not be certain" Hannibal replied "I tried to remove the clamp twenty five minutes ago but he began to bleed out so I had to reapply it"

As a surgeon himself Hannibal knew how long it was safe to leave an aortic clamp on, knew what damage could and would be done from the lack of blood supply and circulation to Wills lower anatomy, especially to his legs and feet, if he came out of this without loosing them then it would be nothing short of a miracle.

"We can't risk taking the clamp off here, we can profuse him fast enough to make up for any further blood loss" the Surgeon stated examining the wounds "We're going to have to risk taking him as he is and get him straight into surgery"

"Yes Sir" the EMT said

"Call ahead, I want a General Surgeon Consultant, a hepatobiliary consultant, and a Cardiothoracic Consultant ready to go as soon as we're there" the Surgeon ordered, flipping back the sheet that Gideon had covered Will's legs with he pulled up the trouser leg to look at the limb.

Even standing at Will's head Hannibal could see that it was discoloured and knew that if he were to touch the limb it would be cold.

"Get an Orthopaedic Surgeon there too, we may have to amputate" the Surgeon said in a matter of fact tone that Hannibal could appreciate, this was not a moment for sentiment but for making difficult decisions that while could cost Will severely might also save his life.

If it came to it then he would help Will through the difficulty of the loss of limb/limbs, would support him in any and every way possible, while also wishing that Gideon was still alive so he could slowly remove his limbs and feed them to him, sans anaesthetic!.

It took another ten minutes before the Surgeon was happy with Will's condition to take him from the Observatory to the Chopper and get him loaded to go to the hospital, by which time Jack and his team had arrived having disregarded any speed limit to get there as fast as they could even if they were risking life and limb considering the state the roads were in.

"OHMYGOD!" Katz cried as they watched Will being loaded in the chopper "What…what did…"

"Dr Gideon disembowelled Will" Hannibal said "I arrived here to find Will…..hollowed out, Gideon was already dead and I did the best I could for Will considering the lack of equipment but he has lost a lot of blood and the aortic clamp has been on for a considerable length of time"

Katz made a high pitch whimpering noise in her throat and covered her mouth with her hand and allowed Zeller to place one on her shoulder in comfort which showed just how distraught she was

"God help him" Price whispered, all of them knew enough about anatomy to know what Will was facing if he lived at all.

Jack might not know a huge amount about medical matters, but he did know enough to know that his empath and friend was fighting for his life a fight he could very easily loose.

Taking a breath he turned to Hannibal who was wiping blood from his hands, Wills blood his mind stated making him shudder and swallow hard.

"Why did you come here Doctor Lecter?" he asked in a horse voice
"I was invited" Hannibal replied, reaching into his pocket he held out his mobile phone and showed a call from an unknown number "Whether it was Doctor Gideon who invited me I can not say, I did not recognise the voice and was simply instructed to come here if I wished for Will to live"

"That was a great risk" Jack said "If the Ripper……." he paused and looked around frowning deeply "You said Gideon was dead when you got here?"

“Yes” Hannibal repeated

“I presume that Will could not have killed him?”

Hannibal shook his head “Will was in no condition to even sit up let alone anything else Jack”
“Then The Ripper must have killed Gideon” Jack said running a hand over his face “Did you see anyone else here?, in the shadows perhaps?”

“There was a car leaving as I arrived” Hannibal lied with such smoothness it would have convinced Saint Peter it was the truth!, “The headlights blinded me for a moment giving the driver the chance to pull away without my seeing them”

“The Ripper” Price said “Obviously he came, did his…usual tricks and then left”, he looked Hannibal up and down “You’re lucky he wasn’t interested in you”

“Or Will apparently” Katz said having recovered herself then frowned “Unless he did that to Will…?”

Hannibal shook his head “As I am given to understand The Chesapeake Ripper takes Surgical trophies?”

“Yes”

“Will was not missing any limbs or organs, they had been removed from his body but not from the vicinity”
All of the team looked rather queasy for a second at the thought of this, of Will eviscerated.

“Sir I’d like to go to the hospital” Katz said in quiet voice that shook a little, she was fighting back the urge to cry, making herself stay professional despite the turmoil she was feeling

“We all would” Jack said his voice and words bitter “And we will” he stated turning to look at the observatory “But first we need to gather evidence, process the scene”, he held up a hand as Zeller opened his mouth likely to voice an objection “The sooner we get this done, the sooner we can go to the hospital, so save your complaints and get working!”

Chastened Zeller did as he was bid and made his way into the observatory followed by Price and Katz leaving Hannibal and Jack alone for the moment

“I’ll be going to the hospital myself” Hannibal said “I will keep you updated on Will’s condition”

“Thank you” Jack said deeply grateful “And……..Thank God you were here tonight, if you hadn’t been…”

Hannibal sighed “I can not be sure that I have saved Wills life, I have only lengthened it for a time”

“Lets hope for the best” Jack said, though by his grim expression and melancholy tone he was not hopeful himself

Hannibal nodded and turned to head for his car preparing to make the long drive to the hospital.

Hospital

The drive to the hospital took Hannibal nearly an hour with the poor weather and despite the hour the car park was busy forcing him drive around twice before he could allocate a spot to park up.

Instead of going to the Emergency Department he went straight to the main reception to inquire about Will.

He made sure to introduce himself as Doctor Lecter to the receptionist and to explain that he had been the one to administer the first aid and field surgery upon him so he would not be fobbed off with the usual "Critical but stable" reply that was generally given out to Non family members, not that Will had any family so far as he knew

"Of course Doctor Lecter just give me a moment" the fifty something receptionist said ducking her shocking brightly coloured red haired head to look at her computer screen and tap at the keyboard

"Ah I'm afraid Mr Graham is still in surgery at present" she said regretfully "And the surgery is estimated to continue for several hours yet"

That was to be expected, Will's injuries were going to take a long time to treat so Hannibal was not surprised to hear this

"If you would like I could have someone take you down to the theatre?" the receptionist asked figuring that if he'd done field surgery on Will then he'd be alright going into the theatre

"If you would please" Hannibal replied giving her a charming smile that earned him one in return as she made an internal phone call to summon an orderly to direct him to the trauma theatre and show him where he could leave his clothing and change into hospital scrubs so he could actually go into the theatre himself and not just stand behind the screens to speak to the surgeons at work on Will.

"Well, well Dr Lecter what a pleasant surprise" the Trauma surgeon greeted as Hannibal came into the theatre

"Doctor Kurt" Hannibal replied having learned the mans name from the orderly who'd brought him in "I have no plans to interfere I just wish to know how Will is doing?", Hannibal was relieved to see that Will still had both legs and feet attached but more than that he could not determine with the surgeons and surgical staff in the way

“He’s a fighter” Kurt said “He isn’t giving in despite the odds being against him. The cold must have been in his favour, there’s not too much tissue damage to his extremities, nor are his gases dangerous so we shouldn’t have to amputate after all, the cold must have delayed the degradation of the tissues”

“He has lost his spleen though and one of the kidneys is past saving” one of the other surgeons offered only briefly glancing up from his work, “And we’re having difficulty with the large intestine, he may end up loosing part of it, and possibly the gall bladder”

Spleen, compromised immune system, need anti biotics for life along with blood thinners, kidney, low salt, moderate protein diet, gall bladder very low fat diet, but all organs that could be lived without.

“How about the Liver?” Hannibal asked “The sack was bleeding…?”

“He’s lost one third of it but it’ll heal” the hepatobiliary consultant said

“We’re also doing a graft on the IVC” the Cardio Thoracic consultant stated “It appears it ruptured when circulation was restored for a time”

“Yes Will began to bleed out and I was forced to reclamp his aorta”

“Considering the level of damage done it’s a wonder he’s alive at all” Kurt said “If not for your actions Doctor Lecter he wouldn’t have made it this far”

“Alright I’m going to have to remove a good third of large intestine here” the general surgeon said “Then we can start reconnecting the gut”

“Everyone happy for Mr Addison to proceed?” Kurt asked, the Cardio and the Liver hepatobiliary consultants both agreed, “Very well” Kurt said “Lets see if we can’t get his stomach reconnected to his oesophagus…”.

Not wishing to distract the surgeons from their work Hannibal vacated the theatre to go and wait in one of many waiting rooms, the orderly giving him one of the private ones so he didn’t have to be surrounded by others and offering to get him a coffee. While knowing it would be foul as hospital cuisine always was Hannibal agreed and sat down to text Jack the update on Will’s condition and advised him to let Alana Bloom know what was happening.

Letting the hand holding his phone drop to his lap Hannibal tipped his head back closed his eyes to step into his memory palace and revisit a charming patisserie in the Loire Valley while he waited for news on Will to come.

Chapter 8

Surgery lasted nearly eight hours in total before Will was finally wheeled from the theatre into recovery and then into intensive care where he was hooked up to machines monitoring his heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing.

He was still on the ventilator and the Dr Kurt said they had induced a medical coma to aid healing.

A third of Will's bowl had been removed and for a while he would have to use a colostomy bag, and of course he also had a catheter fitted while he was in the coma and bed bound.

One of his kidneys had been beyond saving, one third of his liver had also been removed, along with his spleen, and gall bladder which would mean a restricted diet as Hannibal had predicted.

"The greatest risk now is peritonitis" Kurt said "We're giving him more blood and platelets, we've also got him on dialysis for the time being to keep from stressing his remaining kidney, but if his abdomen becomes infected he won't survive it, not with the state he's in"

"Which is why I assume you have instigated isolation procedure" Hannibal said noting that Will was in a side room with restricted access, only essential medical staff was being allowed in at present to cut down on the risk of infection, everyone else would have to view Will through the glass, Hannibal included

"Exactly" Kurt agreed

"Will uh……will he recover?" Jack asked looking at the Doctors 'Will he recover enough to return to the field' went unsaid but Hannibal could hear the words that were running through Jacks head anyway and clenched his jaw tightly in anger at Jacks concern being more for his work than for his friend who was laying in critical condition before them

Alana Bloom who was standing besides Jack, puffy eyed from crying and sleep deprived clearly noticed the same as Hannibal and stiffened in response scowling at the man darkly

"I'm afraid it's too early to say" Kurt replied "Barring further complications he's still looking at a very long recovery period and will be struggling with anaemia, a compromised immune system, and digestive difficulties for the rest of his life"

"And that is not counting the fact he may require a kidney and liver transplant should those organs fail after the significant trauma they have endured" Hannibal stated his tone more clipped and cold than normal though Jack didn't seem to notice as he shook his head and stared at the too pale and fragile figure laying on the bed in a sea of tubes of wires that connected him to the machines beeping around him.

"I never wanted this" he murmured loosing his normal cold hard professional persona and showing his humanity beneath, a humanity that had seen too many agents lost in the field to a

bullet or a knife and had been forced to carry on never the less, to do his job and not shed his tears until he was somewhere private by which time his tear ducts would have dried over and his pain would be locked away and adding to the every increasing scars on his heart.

“No one wanted this” Alana whispered hastily wiping a tear from her cheek “But it’s happened anyway and now we have to pick up the pieces”

“Just like the broken tea cup!” Hannibal whispered under his breath hiding his amusement and turning to Kurt with a smile “Thank you for all you’ve done”

“Well I wasn’t the only one and Will is still alive largely to your own interventions” Kurt said “But thank you anyway”

“When can we go in to see him?” Alana asked her voice horse
Kurt sighed and looked towards his patient again “Not until he’s out of the coma, then we’ll see how he’s doing”

Unlike Hannibal Alana had never practised anatomical medicine only psychological and so did not know as much about anatomy as Hannibal himself so she was almost as much in the dark as Jack was at this point, something Hannibal wished he were, sometimes ignorance really was bliss, especially in medical matters, being a Doctor, and a surgeon you knew exactly what survival chances were for Will right now and that knowledge was not a comfort it was a curse.

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Abel Gideon’s Last Victim!

Special Agent Will Graham lays in critical condition following his abduction and evisceration at the hands of the Doctor of Death Abel Gideon who was shockingly slain by non other than the Chesapeake Ripper himself!.

Gideon abducted and gutted Graham to make him an offering to The Ripper whom he had become obsessed with, but apparently The Ripper was not impressed with this offering and slew Gideon with the same measure of brutality as he has his other victims.

The tendons in Gideons leg were slashed, his spinal cord severed, his chest cut into and his heart and lungs removed.

This reporter has heard from sources that both heart and lungs were still in use when they were extracted from the body!. A truly gruesome end for a truly gruesome killer to be sure.

Why The Ripper chose to spare Graham's life is unknown, perhaps it is because he thought Graham was already deceased which considered the level of mutilation is understandable, or perhaps he has a liking for the mentally unstable agent?.

Agent Graham's life was saved by the renowned Dr Hannibal Lecter current Psychiatrist and former Trauma surgeon who arrived on scene just in time to perform life saving field surgery on Graham.

How and why Lecter visited the Observatory is not confirmed but sources have said he was invited by Gideon who likely wanted to lure him there to murder him in the same manor as he had other psychiatrists.

Lecter alerted the FBI and kept Graham alive long enough for emergency personal to arrive and take him to hospital where he under went major surgery in which he reportedly lost a kidney, spleen, gall bladder, part of his liver, and large intestine.

Graham has proven that aswell as having mental instability he is resilient as he has continued to fight to survive despite the grievous injuries he has suffered.

Exclusive images of said injuries can be found below but are not for the faint hearted so view at own discretion.

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"Damn that bitch!" Jack snarled having read the Tattlecrime.com article courtesy of Freddie Lounds who despite her own abduction and hypothermic adventure had dared to sneak into the hospital disguise herself as a nurse and break into Will's room, risked giving him an infection to peel back the bandages and dressings on his wounds so she could take several pictures of his raw wounds, even getting a shot of his temporary colostomy bag.

"Freddie Lounds has no conscience or respect for privacy" Hannibal stated just as angry as Jack about the article and the invasion on Will's privacy.

It was sheer luck her meddling hadn't upset his wounds or caused an infection, but as it was he was going to have to suffer the humiliation of having his injuries all over the internet for the world to see. Even though the FBI had invoked a voyeurism law and forced Tattlecrime to remove the images everyone knew it was already too late as they had already gone viral by then and Freddie had created the stir she had wanted to.

"Is it wrong of me to wish that Gideon had cut her tongue out and bled her dry?" Jack asked only half kidding

Hannibal only responded with a smile, he was more than able to appreciate the sentiment himself especially since Abigail had called in tears in worry over Will and the chance he might die.

Hannibal and Alana had done their best to reassure her but until Will awoke there was not much they could do.

“I hear from Dr Bloom that you’ve been visiting daily” Jack said sounding guilty for not doing the same “I’ve tried to get in as often as I can but with Bella…”

“Quantity is not the issue but quality” Hannibal said soothingly “I am sure Will would understand”

“Yeah, yeah he always understands” Jack sighed “I keep thinking, keep wondering how he’s going to come through this, how do you deal with being disembowelled while conscious?” he shook his head letting out a deep and heart felt sigh

“Will has a very long road to recovery ahead of him” Hannibal confirmed “Both physical and psychological, but he has us to help him through it every step of the way”

Or rather he has me to take his hand and guide him every step of the way.

Jack nodded his head gave Hannibal a half hearted smile before turning back to gaze into the blazing hearth as if the flames themselves held the secrets of the universe.

With Jack involved in his brooding Hannibal allowed himself a small smile, Will physiological scars would heal themselves given time, but the psychological ones would nursed by him alone and would allow him to further mould Will to his becoming, it was funny really in a truly twisted way, Gideon’s attempt to take Will from his life forever may have in fact ensured that the opposite would in fact occur, something Hannibal intended to make sure came true.

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An aching abdomen, groggy heavy head, and an oddly full throat were what Will Graham awoke to in his hospital bed.

His waking was slow at first, he dimly heard the beeping of his heart monitor and the rise and fall of the ventilator. His fluttering eyelids showed flashes of his room and the bright over head lights as he slowly pulled himself up from the heavy drug induced sleep he had been kept in.

Finally forcing open eyelids that seemed to be weighed down with lead Will stared at the ceiling for a moment until he became aware of the tube in his throat, then he reflexively began to panic and tried to spit it out…

Chapter 9

Will was sat up in bed looking rather groggy when Hannibal came in.

He had been among the first to be called when Will had regained consciousness.

Once he'd had the tube removed from his throat and been calmed down by the attending nurses Will was seen by Dr Kurt himself who explained his injuries and what they would mean for him him detail, spending a good hour with him before leaving Will to doze lightly with the aid of morphine which was still be drip fed into his cannula that protruded from the back of his left hand.

He also had a nasal oxygen feed across his face to aid his breathing and get him to take deep breaths as his breathing had been too shallow for the Doctors liking. With his entire abdomen throbbing from being cut open from groin to gullet he was naturally trying to spare himself further pain and so wasn't taking as deep a breath as normal to avoid moving his abdominal muscles. While this was perfectly understandable it wasn't healthy as it put his lungs at risk of developing pneumonia.

Still pasty white in colour and with dark shadows about his eyes Will greeted Hannibal with as bright a smile as he could manage, though with bloodless and dry lips it was a poor thing. Hannibal however appreciated the gesture and smiled in return.

"It's good to see you awake at last" he said stopping by the end of Will's bed first to look at his medical notes nodding his head as he took in the information.

Setting the clip board back down in the cage at the end of the bed he walked round to Will's right and sat down in the chair by his bed with a sigh.

"How do you feel?" he asked

"Bewildered!" Will said huffing a small chuckled, he tried to sit himself up a little more but gave it up as a bad job when his stomach muscles protested vehemently, "And like I was gutted by a deranged lunatic!", he offered Hannibal a wry smile "I really owe you a big thank you"

Hannibal blinked and lifted his brow as if in surprise though he knew exactly what Will was referring to,

"You saved my life" Will said reaching out a shaky hand to Hannibal which the Psychiatrist took and frowned at how cold his fingers felt and wrapped them inside his palm to warm them
"You didn't have to do that" Will said very aware of how cautious he had to be right now, too many people could over hear their conversation for him to really go into any details but he

believed Hannibal was shrewd enough to understand what he was saying even if it were only in subtext.

“You could just left” Will said, “Let nature take it’s course, let Gideon finish me off, but you didn’t, you…, that’s what matters to me, that you cared enough to save me”

With his eyes and as strong a squeeze of his hand that he was capable of giving in his weakened state Will pleaded for Hannibal to hear what he wasn’t currently able to say owing to their lack of real privacy and the fact anyone could walk through the door at anytime.

‘I won’t tell anyone you’re The Ripper, I won’t say that you killed Gideon, it doesn’t matter to me, all that matters is that you saved me’

Hannibal’s lips quirked into a small smile indicating he understood though he suspected that they would be speaking of this in depth once Will was released from the hospital, though it would be a while before that happened.
“I could never have abandoned you Will” he said at length his thumb now gently stroking over the back of Will’s hand sending pleasant tingles through his skin, “When I saw you there…, it was one of the worst moments in my life”,

So like Mischa’s death, so like seeing her baby teeth in the bottom of that bowl.

He drew in a sharp breath mentally shaking himself out of what could easily become a very distressing flash back and Hannibal had suffered enough of those in his youth before he had learned to control them, or rather control his own mind so he didn’t slip into them anymore.

“I am deeply thankful I arrived in time to be of any aid to you” he said conservative in his speech which made Will grin a little, always so very proper was Dr Lecter, in speech, in dress, in everything!.

Okay maybe not everything, murder wasn’t exactly proper, though if anyone could make a bloody brutal crime appear to be a gentlemanly activity it was Hannibal Lecter!.

“I wish my skills could have afforded you less loose of organs but in the circumstances…”

Will snorted cutting Hannibal off “You saved my life!, what’s a couple of organs compared to that?”

Hannibal gave Will a disbelieving look

“You will have to radically alter your diet and life style to accommodate these losses, your liver will heal itself given time but the rest cannot be changed”

“I know” Will said “Low salt and protein, limit alcohol intake, low fat and easy on the sugars”, he wrinkled his nose, “Guess I better get used to rabbit food!”

Now Hannibal chuckled “I think I can do you better than that”, in fact he already had a recipe in mind for Will, something to help with his low iron levels, he would have to be careful with the proteins but one meal with meat would not do him any harm, especially if the rest of the day he only consumed vegetable matter.

A good rich pottage with thin slices of liver.

A very special piece of liver indeed, one that he would very much enjoy removing from a particular person who had worn his patience right out.

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Despite the FBI insisting the her images of Will's injuries be removed from the article Freddie's work had been a great success and made her even more of a sensation than ever before.

The New York Times.

The Washington Post

Had both contacted her and paid for the privilege of being allowed to publish her work on Gideon, The Ripper and Will Graham.

The amount of hits the article had received on line had astonished even her!, truly people really loved blood and gore!, they couldn't get enough of it!.

This was why she was already planning a follow up article.

While she couldn't use the images of Will in hospital she could use older images and several she'd snapped of Hannibal Lecter.
A bloody Manage et trois

Was the title she had chosen

A three sum of blood and gore between The Ripper, Gideon, and Will Graham which had ended in a blood bath and the loss of several organs.

She had even taken an interview with a part time sex therapist who had theories on the sexual urges of psychopaths like The Ripper and Gideon.

A description on how they would have gotten their rocks off over Will's disembowelled body was certain to make for another sensation, because if there was one thing that people loved more than brutal murder, it was sex.

Perhaps because they were both such a primal act?. Freddie didn't have a psychology degree but she would put good money on that fact being true.

With her long red curls wet from the shower and her body stark naked she made her way to the computer and signed back in taking away the screen saver and opening up her word document on which she was currently working.

A frown flitted across her forehead as she looked at the screen and what was written there.

It was wasn't her work at all. Instead is was a very detailed description of her own death with spaces waiting to be filled by detailed pictures!.

"What the fu…".

Freddie didn't get to finish as a gloved hand wrapped about her face with a tissue filled with chloroform and within moments she was unconscious.

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While Jack Crawford had loathed Freddie Lounds with a passion, had wanted to put her behind bars for something/anything!, he had never wished her death.
Certainly not at the hands of The Chesapeake Ripper which was what had occurred and had been perversely posted upon Tattlecrime.com complete with images of her mangled body.

"I guess he didn't like her work after all!" Zellar rather crassly said and ducked his head as Jack gave him a glower

The majority of Freddie's body was splayed across her bed reminiscent to Mary Kelly's body in the nineteenth century when Jack The Ripper had brutally murdered her.

Each one of Freddie's long slender fingers had been neatly severed at the top knuckle including the thumbs and super glued to the keys of her Keyboard

Her tongue was laid over the touch pad of the laptop and there was an open word document saying

"I'd die for a story!"

Her eyes had been plucked from her face and were left to rest upon a copy of The Washington Post with her story of Will's near death featured. A post it note was under them saying

"Always keeping my eyes on the prize!"

Her mobile phone had been jammed into her mouth where her tongue should have been and inside her eye sockets were two camera lenses!.

“Clear The Ripper was mocking her for her profession” Katz said as she took her own images of the scene

“Or punishing her for it” Jack murmured.

Freddie had been completely disembowelled just like Will had by Gideon, only The Ripper hadn’t cared about her living and had done nothing to keep her alive longer than her body could naturally manage under such duress.

“Judging by the haemorrhaging she was alive when her fingers were cut off” Price said with a grimace, “Her eyes were removed pre-mortem, and her tongue”

All of what Freddie had used for her profession had been stripped from her before she had died, she’d have been consciously aware of what was being taken from her, what could never be repaired.

“The Livers gone!” Katz informed Jack as she counted up the decorative display of organs which had been made to sit inside circles of Freddie’s large intestine coils as if they were floating candles in a bowl of water!, save for Freddie’s Uterus and about ten inches of large intestine which had been neatly stitched together and positioned to form a make shift colostomy bag!, the uterus had even been filled with Freddie’s blood to make it large enough to take a decent image with a normal camera!.

“The Ripper was definitely pissed at her about something” Jack said turning away from the hideous remains of a woman he had known “And she paid the price for it”

“Pity Will isn’t here, he’d probably be able to tell us why the Ripper was so mad at her” Zeller said “Could we take him crime scene pictures in the hospital so he could take a look?”, he yelped as a hand slapped the back of his head and glared at Katz
“What was that for!?” he whined

“For being a dick!” Katz retorted unrepentantly “Will nearly died!, his condition is still very serious, he need to rest to recover not be subjected to stress!”

Zeller rubbed the back of his head scowling “I was only saying!” he muttered

“We can’t involve Will in this” Katz said to Jack “He just can’t take the stress right now”

Jack sighed and nodded his head morosely, if ever they’d needed Will….

“What about Dr Lecter?” Price offered making Jack look up “I’ll bet he could help us out!”

“Yeah!” Jack murmured a smile crossing his face “Not a bad idea Jimmy Thanks!”.

As Jack turned and left the room tapping at his phone Zeller scowled at Price “How come you get praise and all I get is abuse!?”

Price smiled “Because I’m adorable and you’re a dick!”

Zeller pouted but Katz laughed.

****

Hannibal had just finished making the base of the soup for Will when Jack called him and a slow smile curved his lips as Jack explained the situation and requested his assistance.

“Of course Jack I quite understand” He said heading to the fridge to take out the liver so he could slice and pan sear it “It’s much better to keep Will out of this in his condition, he must be kept stress free and relaxed if he is to heal”

From his block he selected a very sharp knife to cut the liver into thin slivers

“Of course I shall join you at the BAU in approximately two hours. Goodbye Jack”
Setting the phone back in the cradle Hannibal set about slicing the liver, he had just enough time to get it cooked and left on the side to cool while he went to The BAU, then when he got back he could finish the soup and head over to the hospital and see how Will was doing.

“Well at least there’s one thing Miss Lounds”, he said to the liver he was slicing “You were never a heavy drinker and for once you will aid someone rather than hurt them!”.

Chapter 10

“You’re eating them”

It was not a question but a statement that Will made as Hannibal sat down besides his bed.

Will looked a little better, he had more colour in his cheeks and his eyes looked less sunken and shadowed. His hands however still trembled when he moved them and there were creases of tension by his eyes and over his forehead showing that he was still in a considerable amount of pain.

Hannibal did not flinch or show any discomfort at Will’s words instead he just took his seat and crossed his legs and leaned back in the chair looking as relaxed as ever. Not a single muscle or nerves betrayed him while inside his heart was hammering with fear of being exposed and his mind was rapidly considering his options and disregarding various scenarios.

“I figured it out” Will said and with a shaking hand tapped the tablet resting on the side of his bed “Alana brought this in for me and I saw the news report on Freddie Lounds, I read how her Liver had been removed and a few hours after her death you brought me in soup containing liver”

Will rolled his lips and managed a nervous smile “Some people believe in coincidence, me however?, no, I go with my gut and my gut is telling me that you don’t just kill, you…eat the kill, and you have others eat the kill with you”

“Have you shared this information with anyone?”, considering how calmly Hannibal spoke one would think that he was inquiring about the weather rather than if Will had told the authorities about his murderous activities!.

“No” Will said “I just…, if this is every going to be anything then we can’t have anymore secrets between us, I can’t be with you if you’re going to manipulate me, the only way this is going to work is if we’re equal and that means honesty”

“Honesty” Hannibal repeated a slight smile curving his lips “That is your condition for a relationship?”
“Well if there is no honesty then there is no trust and if there is no trust then there is no relationship is there?”

Hannibal considered this, “Do you trust me Will?”

“I want to, I really want to”

Somehow that was better than a plain yes and pleased Hannibal all the more

“Then I will endeavour to earn your trust and promise not to abuse it”

“I’ll hold you to that” Will said relaxing now and laying a hand over his abdomen

“You’re still in pain?”

“I’m cutting back on the morphine” Will admitted “I don’t want to get hooked if I can help it”

“That is a wise precaution but you should not make yourself suffer unnecessarily especially considering that such stress will not help your recovery at all”

Will gave Hannibal a wry smile “Is this your condition for a relationship, that I take care of myself?”

“No, I rather enjoy taking care of you myself!”

If Will had enough blood to spare he would most certainly have flushed at this, as it was he felt a warmth spread through his belly at the thought of Hannibal taking care of him. It had been a long time since anyone had bothered to do such a thing, his Father had been the last person to really care for him and while he had done his best he’d had to work long hours to provide for them both and so young Will had often had to make do on his own. While a lot of people would say his Father had neglected him Will would argue with that, his Father hadn’t intentionally done so, he’d worked his fingers to the bone from sun up to sun down to put food on the table and clothes on their backs, he might not have always been there but that was because he was trying to provide for his family not because he was off on the piss or anything.
The thought of being really cared for by someone else was foreign to Will, foreign and exciting.

“Does this mean I’m gonna be you pampered kept man?” he asked with a lob sided grin

“I think a little pampering will be very beneficial for you”, this wasn’t a yes and it wasn’t a no, once again Hannibal managed to keep Will guessing, something he was certain would be a permanent feature in their relationship

“Have you given any thought as to what you will do when you are released from the hospital?” Hannibal asked changing the subject

“Do?”
“You will not be well enough to live alone for some time” Hannibal explained “Your stomach muscles will take a minimum of six weeks to heal and you still have to learn to adapt to a new diet and…deal with the colostomy bag for several months yet”

Will grimaced “That’s a gross thought”

“Merely a bodily function that medicine is aiding it is not disgusting anymore than any act of nature is”

Hannibal spoke with such honesty that Will knew he wasn’t just trying to make him feel better, he supposed it had to do with Hannibal being a medical practitioner, to him all aspects of anatomy and their functions were part of nature and neither disgusting or embarrassing, however he doubted no matter how much Hannibal reassured him he wouldn’t feel like

getting physical until the bag had been removed, just five months and twenty one days to go!, dear God he'd die of blue balls before then!.

"Would you consider moving in with me?"

Will's eyes opened wide at that and he was left completely speechless at the suggestion

"I realize it is rather fast but you are not likely to be released from hospital for several weeks yet which will give us time to get to know each other better"

"I'm a restless sleeper" Will warned "I sleep walk and have really bad nightmares, I'm not sure if I snore or not though"

Hannibal smiled "I have cold feet and I have been told I sleep with my eyes half lidded, we all have our idiosyncrasies it is what makes us unique", he sighed "I will hire a contractor to build a large kennel in the yard, something to accommodate all of your pack"

Will brightened like a Christmas tree at the mention of his mutts "You wouldn't mind having them stay?"

"So long as they do not get on the furniture, and certainly not on the bed"

"Oh but it's so nice to have a warm body snuggled against you!"

"My dearest Will, I do not think you will require canines for that!".

Baltimore

"You should throw a welcome home/get well party"

This came from Abigail who was visiting Hannibal and helping him bake a fruit loaf to take into the hospital to Will later.

Hannibal had added dates to the recipe as they would help build the iron back up in Will's blood.

He regarded Abigail with a raised eyebrow and was met with one of her nervous smiles, while she trusted him she was still cautious of him something Hannibal applauded, to be wary was to be vigilant and that would help keep her safe in the future.

"He's been through so much" she explained "He's been so hurt it'll be good for him to have something to celebrate"

“Perhaps it will” Hannibal said considering this, he loved entertaining, loved to throw elaborate parties and it would be a pleasure to hold a dinner party in Will’s honour and show him off like the treasure he was.
Will however would as always make the argument that he was not good company or good at socializing, neither of which Hannibal agreed with but did sympathize with. Part of Will’s desire not to socialize was a lack of self esteem, he needed to gain confidence in himself something Hannibal was determined to help give.

Along with some decent clothes!, Hannibal allowed himself a small smile and mentally planned a trip to his tailor to get Will some suitable clothing.

If he did do this, did throw a dinner party for Will then he would keep it “Within the family” so to speak, he wouldn’t invite all of Baltimore’s society, he would simply invite Alana, Abigail, the science team from the BAU, and The Crawfords, so Will would not feel out of place or uncomfortable as he would already know everyone.

“I think you are right” he to Abigail who beamed brightly “A dinner party will be just the thing to lift Will’s spirits when he comes home”

“Can I help?” Abigail asked “With cooking and such?”

“Of course” Hannibal replied “But first I must decide on a menu and get the ingredients”

Tonight he would spend time perusing his recipe collection and deciding from what sources he would get the most choice meats for the party!.

Menu plan

Appetizers

Aubergine, tomato, and grilled goats cheese. Blue cheese and pear tartlets. Bacon wrapped dates stuffed with blue cheese. Indonesian Satay chicken skewers.

Soup

Cream of Mushroom served with handmade honey and sesame seed rolls

Fish course

Prawn and scallop paella

Poultry course

Pan roasted chicken with a squash and chard salad and a bacon vinaigrette. The thin slices of bacon would be taken from the thighs of a vile socialite by the name of Valerie Chester who

enjoyed bedding other women's husbands ruining their marriages and threatening to make rape charges if not "Gifted" monies or jewellery, cars, and property.

Meat Course

Beef Wellington made with tenderloin steak harvested from a rather disagreeable bank clerk by the name of Richard Williams who had rather impressive muscle tone.

Dessert

Lemon and White chocolate mousse with icing sugar dusted raspberries

Cheese, biscuits, and fruit

With the menu decided upon Hannibal simply had to gather the ingredients and send out the invitations to the party.

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

> Trigger warning For graphic surgical torture, (I am not a Doctor or a Nurse all my surgical information is from the net).

Will did not even bother to supress his groan when Jack placed crime scene photos on his tray table and sat down without being asked in the visitors chair that Hannibal used on his daily trips to the hospital to see Will.

“Jack…” he began but Jack held up a hand to him

“I know you’re not fit for field work but there’s nothing stopping you from taking a look at some file photos is there?” he said “Besides Will I need you”

And there it was, emotional blackmail, this was Jacks M.O, make Will feel guilty, feel obligated to do this and he would continue to work even though he really didn’t want to.

Sighing deeply Will reached out and picked up one of the photos wincing as the movement jarred his healing stomach muscles and sat back against the pillows heavily.

“It’s the Ripper isn’t it?” Jack said as Will gazed at the photo of Valerie Chester.

Her wrists had been bound above her head to the bed posts in the shitty motel room she had been found in by the maid service.
She had clear been gagged for a time, her lips were raw and bloody and there were pressure marks about her mouth from where her mouth had been bound.

She had not been stabbed or gutted, instead her legs had been amputated at the hip and she had been left to bleed out on the bed which was soaked in crimson.
Both legs were missing having clearly been taken by the killer who had removed the gag as soon as Valerie passed out from blood loss so she could no longer scream loud enough to be heard.

“It’s the Ripper” Will whispered letting the pendulum swing.

In his mind he could see Hannibal dressed in his plastic suit, could see his expressionless face and his calm relaxed posture as he opened a surgical kit at the foot of the bed and laid out the tools he needed to severe Valerie’s legs.

He could hear Hannibal speaking to Valerie as he began to procedure, ignoring her pleading eyes and weeping sobs.

“There are two types of Hemipelvectomy, an internal and an external. The internal is there half the pelvis is removed and the leg is left intact. An external Hemipelvectomy is where the entire leg and half the pelvis is removed. This is the procedure I have in mind for you Valerie. Only it will not be just half your pelvis but all of your pelvis and both your legs that will be removed tonight”

Valerie sobbed louder and screamed into her gag trying to break the bonds that kept her captive and escape this fate.

Her screams grew louder still and more desperate as Hannibal made the first incision through the anterior abdominal wall and proceeded to divide and ligate the iliac vessels and exposed the sacral nerve roots deep within the pelvic cavity.

Valerie was shaking by now and her screaming had worn away to a pained whimper as the blood loss worked to drain her strength.

By the time Hannibal was done dissecting the posterior skin flap and was severing the gluteus maximus muscles Valerie had past out either from pain or from blood loss.

Completely disregarding Valerie Hannibal wiped away blood with swabs and set about detaching the back muscles from the ilium and the psoas muscle, and skilfully divided the femoral nerves.
Pausing to mop up more blood Hannibal then moved on to divide the symphysis pubis, then moved on to divide the sacral nerve roots.

Hannibal was oblivious to the passing time as he treated Valerie’s body as if she were a patient on the operating table who’s life he was saving rather than ending, he hurried nothing, making careful and precise incisions, not hacking or tearing as he worked.
Finally he severed the pelvic muscles completely freeing the legs from the body with a sickening wet sucking sound as they came away from the body.

Carefully he wrapped them up grease proof paper and placed them in long refrigerated containers so the flesh would not decay and set about packing up his kit, pulled the gag from Valerie’s mouth and left her on the bed without a second glance.

“Well!?”

Jack’s snapping voice pulled Will out of his trance and he let out a deep breath trying to work out what he was feeling right now.

Horror, sickness, and sheer terror.

But these were just surface emotions, digging deeper he found himself feeling excitement, curiosity, and most shockingly arousal!.

“Will is it the Ripper!?” Jack demanded almost but not quite shouting now

“I do hope you are not trying to make Will work Jack he is really not fit for such activities”.

Will could have sobbed with relief as Hannibal came into the room and drew Jack's attention away from him, he wasn't ready to talk about this with Jack yet, didn't know if he could trust his mouth not to betray Hannibal while his mind was spinning.

"Dr Lecter" Jack greeted with a sigh

"Jack" Hannibal replied walking up to the bed and taking the single photo from Will's grasp and shook his head "Sorry Jack but I must insist that you refrain from pushing Will to do this, he is not well enough to bear this kind of stress"

"I'm not taking him to crime scenes Doctor just showing him pictures…"

"Which are distressing to say the least" Hannibal said cutting Jack off "Will needs rest if he is to recover, he can not be put under such pressure right now"

"I don't think you understand how serious this case is…" Jack began to argue but once again Hannibal cut him off

"I don't think you fully comprehend how serious Will's condition is or the severity of his injuries"

"I do.."

"Do you Jack?" Will asked finally speaking up "You come in here with this shit and expect me to perform for you like a trained monkey knowing full well that I was literally gutted just three weeks ago!, Christ Jack I can't even get out of bed unaided!, I can't remain standing for more than ten minutes without passing out!", he broke off clutching his abdomen and panted a little both winded and pained from speaking with more force and agitation than he had in weeks, clearly the fact that he couldn't deal with this right now was no exaggeration, he felt like he'd been punched in the gut from just a few moments harsh speaking!.

"Will you need to relax, lay and back and concentrate on your breathing" Hannibal instructed "In and out, in and out, slow and deep"

"Maybe I should go.." Jack said sounding equally worried that he'd hurt Will and annoyed that he hadn't got his answers

"I think that would be best" Hannibal said without looking up from Will

Jack gathered his case files and paused to look at Will who was breathing easier but looked exhausted "I'll come back when you're feeling better" he said

Will nodded not really listening to his words, he was too focused on Hannibal, was it possible to be focused on anything but Hannibal when he was in the room?, Will seriously doubted it and he didn't even register that Jack had left until Hannibal had taken his place in the seat by the bed.

"Thanks for that" Will said rubbing his stomach gently "I don't think he'd have listened to me"

“Jack needs to learn that you are not at his beck and call” Hannibal said sounding very much like he wanted to teach Jack that himself

“It was you wasn’t it?” Will sighed “Valerie Chester?”, he shook his head disregarding the question as he already knew the answer and there was another he really wanted to know “Why?” he asked “Freddie Lounds I get, she was… contemptable, you certainly did the world a favour with Gideon but why the others?”

Hannibal appeared to give the question some thought before replying “They were unspeakably rude in one way or another”

“Rude?”, Will laughed in disbelief “Seriously?, that’s your motive?, they were rude?”

“Why not?” Hannibal asked

“Why…it’s hardly a reason to kill someone!, everyone is rude Hannibal, I’m rude!”

“You are defensive and react like a cornered beast with confronted, that is not rudeness but a survival technique, and therefore forgivable. It is wilful rudeness that I can not abide”

“Wilful rudeness” Will repeated and shook his head giving an amused snort “And how was Valerie Chester rude?”

“She liked to destroy marriages by seducing the husband, threatening them with rape charges if they did not pay her off and always made sure to let the wife find out about the husbands infidelity”

“Charming!” Will said any sympathy for her slipping away in an instant

“Indeed she was not!”

Will grinned almost involuntarily and glanced at the bag Hannibal had with him “Dare I ask what dinner is?”, he almost gaped at the response he got

“Mediterranean vegetables roasted in garlic and served with a tomato sauce and farfalle pasta!”

Hannibal smirked at the surprise on Will’s face “You need to be careful of your protein in take, especially since I have a very rich meal in mind for when you come out of hospital”

“Ah so I take it you are….stocking up in preparation”

Hannibal lips quirked in a little in a small smile “Something like that, I intend to hold a dinner party to celebrate your release from Hospital…” he held up a hand to forestall any argument from Will “Friends only, no society”

“You don’t count the people you know in society as friends?”
Hannibal tilted his head to the side “One or two perhaps, but most of them are overly arrogant superficial snobs with narrow minds and shallow personalities!”

“They sound such great company!” Will snorted and took a breath “A dinner party then, what brought this about, besides your desire to fatten me up and should I be worried that your house is secretly made out of ginger bread!?”

This brought an outright chuckle from Hannibal “I can assure you it is not made from ginger bread, and actually it was Abigail who suggested a party”

“How is she?” Will asked brightening at the mention of their surrogate daughter

“Well, she’s also determined to write her version of events in regards to her Father’s killings even without Freddie Lounds’s involvement, which will mean she is not cheated out making a profit from the sales”

“I’m sure she’ll do a far better job than Freddie” Will said “And maybe it’ll lead into a career as an author”

“Perhaps” Hannibal mused “Though I hope to see her attend college, if not in the U.S then in Europe”

“Europe?”

“Yes, I would love to show you both Europe, particularly Italy, I spent much time in Florence when I was young”

“Florence, the birth place of the renaissance, Da Vinci, Botticelli, Michelangelo” Will listed

“We could spend many hours admiring the works of the great renaissance artists together, enjoying the fine cuisine of the Florentines, and watch sun set every night overlooking the Duomo from our balcony”

“Oh we have a balcony in this scenario do we!?” Will laughed “Will we be trading Shakespeare quotes too?”

“Only assuming I do not have to risk my life and limbs climbing up a trellis!” Hannibal replied with a smile already mentally planning to update both Abigail and Will’s passports and arrange visas for them all so they could go to Italy as soon as Will was fit enough to travel.

Chapter 12

Will barely kept the snort of laughter from breaking out when he read the paper of another Ripper murder.

This one was of Richard Williams who was found in the bank he worked, his head severed and placed upon the counter, his hands upon the scales that were used to weigh change, and his torso sat in his office chair that was soaked in blood.

His legs below the knee were under the desk with the office shoes still intact but the thighs and buttocks had been removed along with the kidneys from the body.

He was also not surprised when his meal that night came in the form of steak and kidney pie from Hannibal, he might now be having to have a low sodium and protein diet but Hannibal was not about to let him go completely meat free and considering the food that was served in the hospital he would likely have starved were it not for Hannibal's cooking!.

Jack thankfully did not press him into working on the case anymore which he was very grateful for as Will did not feel remotely strong enough to do this without betraying Hannibal since the morphine he was still on was making his mind too fuzzy for him to be certain of what he was saying at times.

Will's recovery was slow and the regaining of his strength was slower still but as the weeks past he began to grow stronger, was able to stay awake for longer periods, could get out of bed and stay on feet long enough to wash himself and relieve himself, and as the days became weeks Will longed more and more for the day he could finally be released from the hospital as the monotony began to really wear thin.

He missed his dogs sorely, missed the peace and quiet of his house, missed sleeping in a comfortable bed rather than the standard hospital bed. He missed wearing his jeans and plaid shirts rather than the hospital gown, missed his life before Gideon's attack upon him.

There had been certainty in his life before then, not stability per say but he did have a sense of routine in his life before then which he did miss now when his days were spent suffering the indignities of having his colostomy bag changed, his wounds checked, blood pressure taken, pulse measured etc.

However while he was missing the simplicity of his previous life, he was also looking forward to the excitement of the days yet to come.

Will had of course had relationships before, not many of them and they had been brief, but he had not lived as a monk all these years.

Yet this was different, he had never been with anyone like Hannibal, there wasn't anyone like Hannibal Lecter, he had no idea what to expect from him in the terms of a relationship, he

had no idea what a relationship meant to Hannibal.
He knew that Hannibal was a very sophisticated man, a man who enjoyed the finest of arts, of food (Including people), of everything in life.

He knew that Hannibal was exceptionally intelligent and very well educated, that he had seen the world and was worldly, but what his expectations were and would be Will had no idea.

He somehow doubted that Hannibal would be the type to flop of a sofa in front of TV watching Netflix and eating take away pizza and drinking beer from the bottle!.

Hannibal was the sort of man who cooked elaborate meals every night and always sat at the dining room table. His idea of a night out was going to the Opera not the cinema, he would go to wine tastings not spend the night in a cheap bar, would go to an art gallery and would see the works of fine talented hands with more depth and intuitive mind than that of any other man.

Could Will with his mediocre education, mundane tastes, and at times rather slovenly lifestyle really fit in with Hannibal?.

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Hannibal knew that Will was uncertain about their slowly developing relationship.

Not his feelings, but of their compatibility, and yes they were very different in many ways, which was something he brought up with Bedelia during his weekly session with her.

“You care very deeply about Will Graham” Bedelia said slowly and quietly as was her way, choosing her words carefully as she spoke
“He is unlike anyone else you have encountered in your life”

“He is indeed” Hannibal agreed a barest hint of a smile on his face “He is…battered and if not abused then misused by the world, has suffered the worst of it’s cruelties through his gift of empathy and has had little in the way of comfort for his endurance”

“And is it comfort that you wish to give him?” Bedelia asked “Or something more?, is he to be placed with the rest of the world on the outside of the veil or will you grant him the chance of seeing what lies beneath?”

Now Hannibal smiled properly “He has already seen what lays there, or at least caught a glimpse”

“You deem him so worthy?”, Bedelia sounded both surprised and jealous of this, the jealousy amused Hannibal, he was after all a vain man and to have a sophisticated and intelligent

woman like Bedelia desiring him was flattering to his ego

“He is more than worthy” Hannibal said with utter conviction “Yet he does not believe himself so”

“He is lacking in self esteem, something you wish to boost?”

“Not boost, what I need to do is to help him learn how to shine for the world, to believe in himself and in his self worth and in doing so he will gain the self esteem he lacks at present”

Bedelia nodded her head once thoughtfully “If I did not know you better I would think you in love with Will Graham”

A ghost of humour traced Hannibal’s face “You think me incapable of love?”

Now Bedelia looked truly astonished

“Clearly you do” Hannibal said not offended as such after all he was such a cerebral man most of the time that deep emotion like love was not what he would deemed capable of by most people, and he had often thought himself incapable of love these long years, and then quite unexpectedly he found himself in love with Will Graham.

“You should take care Hannibal, Love is both a blessing and a curse,” Bedelia said “It can bring a fulfilment to our lives, enrich us with pleasures both physical and emotional, yet it can also bring with it pain beyond any we previously knew, the bitter taste of jealousy and make us capable of incredible cruelty when we are scorned”

Once more Hannibal smiled “How is it put?, Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned?”

Bedelia smiled but the smile did not reach her eyes “It is not only women that can be scorned Hannibal, nor only women that are capable of fury”

“True but I do not believe that Will is going to scorn me or incur my fury so much as…”, Hannibal paused and took a breath “So much as make my life complete”.

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After long endless weeks Will was finally released from the hospital into Hannibal’s care.

Thankfully he was now stable enough on his feet and strong enough to not have to use a wheelchair but a single crutch as his stomach muscles slowly healed.

He had been given a series of exercises to help rebuild his abdominal strength, much like that of woman after pregnancy. He was advised against any intense exercise and especially not weight lifting yet as his muscles were still too fragile. He could also ill afford to loose

anymore weight. Thanks to Hannibal he had been getting one good meal a day but between the hospitals poor offering and the shortening of his large intestine resulting in the expulsion of waste from his body faster than it should he had lost a good twenty pounds in weight that showed on his frame, something Hannibal was determined to see righted.

He smiled wryly when his offer of an arm to Will to help him get out of the car was refused and Will got himself out with a brief grimace of discomfort.

“I think you will find you have been sorely missed by several guests that wait within” Hannibal said shouldering Will’s bag which contained all his medications from the hospital and a weeks worth of colostomy bags that Will was now able to change himself after being taught to do so.
He was on a daily dose of aspirin and a mild dose of anti-biotics everyday along with pain relief when he needed it, and Hannibal was going to make sure he took it when he did.

“Welcome home” he said guiding Will into his home which he intended to permanently become Will’s home too something which by the flurry of paws and furry bodies greeting them and sheer joy on Will’s face as he sank to his knees to fuss his beloved pack would not be overly difficult.

Chapter 13

By Hannibal's standards the dinner party/welcome home party he threw in Will's honour was small and simple even though to most peoples standards the dishes were very rich and elaborate as were the decorations that Hannibal had laid about the dining room.

Most people would be content with a table cloth and candles but not Hannibal, he had to have elaborate table decorations made for each occasion even going so far as to hand craft them himself!.

Despite doing all the cooking himself Hannibal did accept help in preparation from both Will and Abigail, getting them to slice the vegetables ready for him to use them and to measure out herbs and spices for him.

Before the dinner party however a shopping trip took place and to Abigail's delight Hannibal even took her shopping to get her a formal dress to wear for the evening, taking her to an exclusive boutique to select the dress and even paying for it to be fitted for her.

The gown she chose was a fifties retro style gown of burned amber satin, with a boned bodice and flared knee length skirt from the waist complete with netted petti coats beneath to help create the fullness of the skirt and a high waisted belt of black satin.

At the suggestion of the boutiques owner she chose a shrug of black satin to go over her shoulders and a pair of kitten heeled dress shoes to match.

"Now all you need is jewellery and the outfit will be complete" Hannibal said and was rewarded by Abigail letting out a girlish squeal of delight and throw her arms about him hugging him tight

"You're spoiling her" Will chuckled having tagged along on the shopping trip, it wasn't really his thing but Abigail had pleaded and he hadn't been able to refuse her, besides which Hannibal insisted he come as he was taking Will to the boutique he frequented himself to get him a suit for the dinner along with a new one for himself.

"A little spoiling now and then never hurt anyone" Hannibal said making a mental note of the other dresses that Abigail showed an interest in and planned to buy them for her ready for their trip to Italy. With what he had planned for them in Europe she would need formal wear along with more casual clothing and of course would need the shoes, bags, and other accessories to kit her out completely.

Will too was in need of full wardrobe for Europe which Hannibal was planning on getting for him.

Will's usual day to day clothing choices maybe jeans and plaid shirts but Hannibal was certain he could provide a much better choice in clothing that would be both flattering for

Will and still comfortable enough for him to find acceptable to wear on a daily basis.

The Jewellery store however came before the boutique for himself and Will and the three of them spent some time in the store selecting jewellery appropriate for Abigail to wear with her new dress.

A small pair of amber and gold drop earrings with a matching necklace of gold with an amber pendant.

Both Will and Abigail's eyes bugged at the cost that displayed on the till but Hannibal simply paid without a second thought.

"I've never had anyone but me something so expensive before" Abigail whispered into Will's ear

"Hannibal has a flamboyant personality and enjoys making grand gestures like this" Will said grinning as he saw the muscles in Hannibal's jaw twitch as the older man over heard what he was saying and was repressing a smile
"That or he was visited by the ghost of Christmas Past and is trying to make amends!"

Abigail giggled at that and beamed as Hannibal turned back from the till and handed her the small bag marked with the jewellery stores logo.

"And no it's my turn to be turned in a shop window dummy?" Will asked with a dramatic sigh that made Abigail giggle again

"Honestly Will anyone would think I was asking you to do something painful!" Hannibal playfully scolded as they made their way from the store and back out into the winter sunlight which brought a pleasant glimmer of warmth in the frigid air. The snow was still thick on the ground where it had not been dug away or trampled down, and the chill of the air turned their noses and cheeks red as they made their way down the street, going at a slower pace than normal as Will did not have the strength to move at his usual pace yet, he was however regaining stamina which had made this trip a possibility.

As they stepped through the doors into Hannibal's favourite boutique, they were greeted by the owner.
"Annibahl!" he greeted with a beaming smile his French accent thick and lyrical "It 'as been too long Mon Cher", he air kissed Hannibal's cheeks which Hannibal reciprocated without a second hesitation

"A pleasure as always Henri" Hannibal said "I do regret that it has been some time since I last visited but I have been otherwise occupied"

"Ah always busy, so busy you must learn to relax more and take life more easily" Henri stated with a flurry of his hands

“As you always tell me” Hannibal said patiently “And please allow me to introduce my dearest friends Will Graham and Abigail Hobbs”

“Enchante Cherie” Henri greeted Abigail taking and kissing the back of her hand, “Bonjour Monsieur Greehaim” he said to Will who smiled in return

“I am hoping to purchase Myself and Will new suits today” Hannibal said “Something fitting for an evening dinner but not black tie and tails”

“Bonn, I believe I have what you need” Henri said gesturing for them to follow him further into the shop and called at for his assistant who joined them coming through from the back of the store carrying several silk shirts in varies shades which he hung up on one of the racks

“Ah Charles Monsieur Annibahl and Monsieur Greehaim are in need of smart but casual suits for an evening dinner, I believe we can accommodate them can’t we?”

“Sure!” Charles said in a New York accent that sounded somehow foreign in the Boutique next to Henri’s accent, however within moments Will found himself presented with six suits in different shades and materials to choose from.

“If I may sir?” Charles said making Will look up from examining the fine silk of one of them “I think the best choices for in colour would be blues, greens, greys, and browns, they will flatter your skin tone without looking garish or draining you”

Will gulped slightly and flushed “Is it very obvious that I’m not use to this sort of thing?” he asked in a hushed tone

“A little” Charles said sympathetically “But an Ingenue is not the same as a ruffian and I am happy to help you and make this a pleasant experience for you”

“Ingenue?” Will repeated raising an eyebrow “I would never have described myself as that but I guess it’s better than a ruffian!”

Charles chuckled and nodded “Now if you will consent to take my advice?” he asked

“Please” Will said grateful for any and all help with these sort of matters, he wanted to make a good impression on Hannibal, to show that he was willing to make an effort to fit into his world as Hannibal had made an effort to incorporate him into it and made changes for him. He had allowed Will’s dogs to come and live with them at his house, had a two story shed built for them in the back yard and trimmed with faux fur and insulated to keep them warm and dry during bad weather, he even let them into the house during the day and had purchased seven plush dog beds of varies sizes for them to use while in the house forbidding them only from his bedroom and his office which was easily achieved by keeping the doors closed, and Will’s dogs were very well trained so apart from hair on the floor and some paw prints they were no difficulty at all.

Will looked over to where Hannibal was standing with Abigail and Henri having apparently selected a burgundy suit for himself and was now looking at shirt options

“I want to… be impressive” he said to Charles who nodded and moved a midnight blue suit to the front of the selection he held out for Will

“This with a pale blue shirt and a plain royal blue tie would be sufficient I believe”

Will took hold of the suit and held it up. It was less elaborate than Hannibal’s checked suits and was not in silk or satin but some kind of supple linen that Will knew would be very comfortable.

“Have you found anything my Dear?” Hannibal asked coming over to Will and looked down at the suit in Charles’s hands “Hmm, understated but elegant and refined” he declared “I think it will suit you well”

Will nodded in agreement

“Will you be requiring tailoring too?” Charles asked
Will opened his mouth to say no but Hannibal beat him to it

“Yes please”, he shrugged when Will looked at him in surprise, “Why buy a suit at all if you do not have it fitted like a glove?”

“Most of the worlds population buy off the rack and make do!” Will challenged

“Mediocrity is never something I have aspired towards!” Hannibal said “Nor should you”

Will blew a small huff of breath from his nose succumbing to Hannibal’s will yet again

“I’ll just take your measurements” Charles said take the tape measure that was hanging over his shoulders and preparing to measure Will

“Umm before you do that” Will said looking uncomfortable “I have a…temporary colostomy bag fitted”, his cheeks flushed in shame at having to admit this to a stranger but Hannibal’s large warm hand rested on his shoulder providing him support

“Will was gravely injured some weeks earlier and is still recovering” he explained to Charles who’s eyes widened in shock

“My God you’re that Will Graham!” he exclaimed “I read about you in the Paper, holy crap you were…” he broke off and flushed at having nearly said “Gutted!”

“I am…glad to see you’re recovered, it’s incredible you survived” he mumbled

Meeting a fan might not be an always pleasant experience but Charles was not forcing himself on Will for attention or being obnoxious in anyway and Will doubted that there were many people who hadn’t read the report in papers so Will did not hold it against him and simply smiled and replied calmly

“I owe my survival to Hannibal, he was the one who saved me, I wouldn’t have made it if not for him”, he beamed up at Hannibal “He was my hero!”

Now it was Hannibal's turn to blush a little though he also preened at the praise from Will

"He's saved both our lives" Abigail piped up coming up on Hannibal's right and gazed at him with adoration in her eyes

"Ah I always knew you were great man Annibahl!" Henri declared "But to save two lives Mon Dieu!,
C'est magnifique!, and for you Mon Ami I shall give you a fifty percent discount upon your purchases!"

"That is really not necessary" Hannibal said with gracious humility, the cost was nothing to him, having money was nothing to him, he liked finery because he was vain but he was also more than capable of living without it if needs be. However he was also not the type to cut his nose off to spite his face or to look a gift horse in the mouth, he stated that such a gift was unnecessary because it was "The thing to do" but he was not going to refuse the gift either so when Henri insisted he graciously accepted.

Charles carefully took Will's measurements adding an inch to the waist measurements to give room for the colostomy bag without it being restricted by his clothing.

"We'll have the suits ready in three days" Henri assured Hannibal

"Perfect" Hannibal said "Right in time for the dinner party"

Will gave a half smile with a sort of long suffering/indulgent expression on his face while Abigail beamed excitedly clearly looking forward to getting to dress up for a night.

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Even having been living with Hannibal for a number of days Will was still amazed to find that he owned a television!.

Somehow the concept of Hannibal watching TV was foreign to him!, he pictured the man reading Machiavelli while listening to classical music not watching desperate House Wives or something!.

Hannibal didn't watch Desperate House Wives (Thank God), but he did watch historical dramas like The Tudors, Versailles, and Reign, and he watched a lot of documentaries on Discovery and History channels, something Will enjoyed himself so he was very content to stretch out on Hannibal's absurdly large and comfortable sofa watching a Space documentary with his head resting in Hannibal's lap and the older mans fingers stroking through his hair.

"You are not worried about tomorrow night are you?" Hannibal asked trailing his fingers over Will's scalp and sent tingles through Will's head

“No not worried exactly” Will replied truthfully “Maybe a little nervous”

“Why?” Hannibal asked “You have nothing to fear”

“I know” Will said looking up at Hannibal now “I just want don’t to let you down”

“My dearest Will” Hannibal said “You could never let me down”

When Hannibal said things like that to him with such sincerity Will felt like he was being bathed in sunlight, like he was an ancient Greek supplicant being blessed by the attentions of an Olympian God, thinking of Hannibal as something more than mortal was very easy for he was like no one else in the world and knowing him was truly as much a humbling experience as it was a blessing.

Chapter 14

“Freud was a pain!” Alana Bloom declared over the dinner table, “Addicted to Coke, and obsessed with sex!”

“Wasn’t one of his theories that every boy wants to murder his Father so he can marry his Mother?” Jack asked “I seem to recall that”

“The Oedipus Complex” Hannibal said “But then Freud believed that all tensions and psychological problems were rooted in the libido”

“So to solve every problem all you’ve got to do is get laid!?” Zeller laughed causing a ripple of laughter to flow around the dinner table

“There are minors present!” Will gently protested for Abigail’s benefit, she was sitting opposite him, the two of them on Hannibal’s right and left as he sat at the head of the table over seeing the whole party like a King before his court. It was ridiculously easy to imagine Hannibal as a medieval King in furs and satin sat before a grand feast with minstrels playing and courtiers dancing and fawning over him.
There was something very regal and majestic about Hannibal Lecter that made him seem like a King of old, (Including his rather blood thirsty proclivities!).

Abigail grinned and sipped her wine, she’d been allowed a single glass with dinner with Hannibal stating that in most of Europe children were brought up drinking wine with their meals.

“It’s alright Will I know about sex” she said “I’ve done Sex-Ed and human development”

Will mock winced and dramatically placed a hand over his heart “Here I thought you still believed in the Stork!”

“Who started that stupid story?” Katz cried shaking her head “Storks dropping babies on the doorstep!”

“It probably derives from medieval tales, like the fairy changeling child” Hannibal theorized
“The times when people had heads cut off and torture was considered an afternoon entertainment for the populous!” Alana said setting down her fork as she finished her prawn and scallop paella.
“Hmm and speaking of torture, the Ripper’s certainly been productive of late” Jack said ensuing a groaning about the table and a tap on the back of his hand from Bella

“I thought we agreed no shop talk” she chided

“Yes please!” Jimmy said “I don’t want to think about dismemberment while I’m eating!”

“Or at all” Katz said finishing her wine

“I quite agree” Hannibal stated rising and beginning to gather to plates to take them out and bring in the next course with Abigail’s help “There are far more pleasant subjects to be discussed”

“Like clothes!” Alana said getting a grin from Katz and Bella while the men groaned

“How about the football scores?” Zeller asked

“How about shut the hell up!?” Katz replied

Zeller gave her a wounded Puppy face “Why are you so mean to me?” he whined

“Because you’re an unapologetic jackass!” she said dismissively

“Well yeah but does that mean you have to be mean to me!”.

The sounds of soft laughter and Katz and Zeller’s playful arguing trickled into the kitchen as Abigail and Hannibal served the next course.

“Enjoying yourself?” he asked her

“Very much” Abigail said “Will looks happy too”

“He does” Hannibal agreed

Will had been nervous to begin with but had relaxed as the evening had progressed and had started to come out of his shell in the group.

While Hannibal’s jealousy flared possessively at this his pride puffed and preened to see others appreciating what was his and his alone.

What would Freud have thought of this?, no doubt he would have had some theory about Hannibal’s thoughts and feelings on this subject and would have been fascinating to have analysed said theory.
“And I trust you are enjoying yourself” Hannibal said scrutinizing Abigail without being obvious about it, a useful skill when it came to psycho-analysis of volatile patients.

“Sure” Abigail replied resting her weight on one foot while she extended her other leg and pointed her toes like a ballerina “I just wish Jack would stop talking about The Ripper”

“Jack is devoted to his work” Hannibal said

“It’s making Will uncomfortable” Abigail said “Jack might not be saying it but he wants Will back at work and if it weren’t for other people being around then he would be pressuring him into agreeing to go back into the field no matter what the risk is to Will’s health”.

Considering she had only had very brief contact with Jack, Abigail was very perceptive of him.

It wasn't that Jack was a bad man, he really wasn't, he was just very pig headed, when he wanted something he went for it all guns blazing and expected everyone else to follow in suite whether or not they wanted to. That was his approach when it came to Will, bullying him into putting himself through hell to catch criminals even when it was tearing Will apart.

Well after all Will had gone through Hannibal was not going to stand idle anymore on this subject, he was not going to sign Will as being fit for the field again which after such a serious injury would be required before he'd be allowed back out in the field, and if necessary he would file a formal complaint against Jack if the man tried to go behind his back and seek another psychiatrists opinion on Will.

"You won't let Jack hurt Will right?" Abigail asked in that sly way of hers where she asked a question that was laced with subtext and innuendo, in this case what she was really saying was

"You'll stop Jack before he gets too close won't you?, if necessary you'll kill him to keep him from destroying our family?", which was what she, Hannibal, and Will were slowly but surely becoming and Hannibal would reign hell down on anyone who tried to harm them.

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Jimmy let out a moan of bliss as he tasted the Beef Wellington, the meat was so tender and well done that it just about melted in the mouth.

"I think I just died and went to heaven!" Zeller stated
"Definitely the finest Beef Wellington I have ever tasted" Jack agreed

Hannibal smiled and dipped his head in acknowledgement of the compliment modestly, "While I enjoy your appreciation of my skill in culinary arts I must always say that I am only as good as my meat, to create a fine dish one needs a fine cut or no matter what the skill the meal will always be a disappointment"

"Hmm you have got to give me the name of your butcher" Alana said leaning a little more forward so her low cut dress was put to full effect to give Hannibal a direct view of her breasts which he hardly paid a passing glance at, his attention being focused on Will who looked incredible in his new suit with his hair tamed for once thanks to a little gel being used to restrain the wild curls.

She frowned at Hannibal's lack of interest and followed his gaze to Will curiously, if she didn't know better then with the furtive glances and small secretive smiles on the two she would think they were lovers!.

"You know if I was going to be give cordon bluer meals and be able to recuperate from injury in a place as fine as this I'd happily get injured in the line of duty" Zeller stated with a grin to Will who made a negative noise and shook his head

"As fine as Hannibal's cooking is and as beautiful as his house is I still wouldn't recommend being gutted, and besides…," he gave Hannibal a cheeky smile "As a nurse he leaves a lot to be desired!, no skimpy uniform, no stroking my fevered brow…!"

"You do not have a fevered brow" Hannibal stated smiling back "And I am a doctor not a nurse"

"More like a sadist when it comes to the physio" Will grumbled, if it were not for Hannibal's insistence that he exercise his stomach muscles every day then he probably would not be doing so, Will was not a fan of working out beyond taking his dogs for long walks, he didn't lift weights or spend hours in the gym pumping iron, his slenderness was simply a matter of genetics (And forgetting to eat when preoccupied) not a matter of hard work.

But with Hannibal's strict regime he was eating three healthy square meals a day and doing his physio to rebuild the muscle tone he had lost and re-strengthen his stomach muscles even though he groaned and grumbled all the way through it!.

"Besides Z you wouldn't get anyone like Dr Lecter to look after you" Katz said "You'd be lucky if you got Nurse Ratchet!"

Zeller made a wounded noise in his throat and placed a hand over his heart as if he had been injured

"Besides" Jimmy laughed "The only way you'd get injured in the field is if you tripped open your own feet and broke your ankle!"

Laughter rang about the table at Zeller's expense and flipped everyone off with a mulish expression
Still chuckling a little Jack turned to look at Will, "So have you got a date set for when you'll be returning to work?" he asked, while his tone was casual it was easy to read the eagerness in his eyes to get Will back into the field and catching criminals for him again.

Will tensed and looked down at his plate his appetite slipping away and his mouth growing dry.

Abigail narrowed her eyes and glared at Jack darkly, she twisted her dinner knife in her hand imagining using it to gut Jack the way her Father had taught her to gut deer, and people.

"Jack!" Alana said softly "Now isn't the time"

“It’s just a question” Jack said obviously trying to sound innocent even though he was far from it

“Certainly not anytime soon” Hannibal said surreptitiously slipped his right hand under the table and placing it on Will’s knee and squeezed it gently more in comfort and support than in an attempt at seduction “Will still has a lot of recovering to do”

Will looked up and met Hannibal’s gaze, some how he felt strengthened by Hannibal’s presence, as if the unfaltering support and love Hannibal bestowed on him built a protective shield about his body keeping him safe from any blows, be they physical or emotional.

“Actually Jack I am going on sabbatical from teaching for a while” he said turning to meet Jack’s gaze “And I will be formally retiring from the field!”.

This took even Hannibal by surprise, he had known that Will was going to take time out from work but he hadn’t know he was going to formally retire from field work, of course he had been planning to discourage any return to field work but had not expected Will to so simply tell Jack he was retiring!.

Everyone at the table had fallen silent and tension hung in the air as they waited with baited breath for Jacks response.

Bella placed a hand on Jack’s thigh to ground him and hopefully keep his temper from flaring as he gazed at Will looking like he was half waiting for a punch line to follow the statement, when one didn’t he cleared his throat and spoke

“Retire?”

“Yes” Will said firmly, he felt Hannibal’s hand squeeze his knee in support “I just can’t do this anymore Jack, not after…, not after Gideon”

Jack sighed and placed his hands on the dinner table taking several calming breaths “I understand that you’ve been through a lot…”
“A lot!” Abigail exclaimed “He nearly died!”

“Abigail it’s alright” Will said trying to soothe her

“No it isn’t!” she protested “You could have died and all he can think about is dragging back to work!”

“Hmm it’s getting a little warm in here” Alana said rising from her seat besides Abigail and placing a hand on her shoulder “Shall we go and get some air outside, see what Will’s dogs are up to?”

Abigail looked to Will for assurance that he’d be alright, and then to Hannibal for the same before she agreed and rose from her seat to join Alana.

“Will please” Jack said as soon as they were gone “I know you need time to regain your strength but we need you out there!, how are we supposed to capture these psychos without you?”

Will shrugged “You did perfectly well without me before, you can do so again”

“What about the Ripper!” Jack demanded

Will sighed deeply his own temper starting to wear thin with Jack’s stubbornness “The Ripper is not going to be caught Jack, not by you, not by me, not by anyone. He will be like Jack the Ripper, the one that got away, he has been doing this for too long and with too much skill to ever get caught now no matter who is investigating him”

Hannibal only just managed to keep from preening at Will’s praise and felt exceptional pride in Will for standing up to Jack like this

“No!” Jack said shaking his head “You can’t do this”

“Jack” Hannibal said finally cutting in “You are going to have to respect Will’s decision on the matter, I for one support his choice”

“What are you going to do while you are on sabbatical?” Katz asked hoping to keep Jack from making an out burst

“I’m not entirely sure yet” Will admitted and looked to Hannibal a little cautiously “But we have talked about going to Europe”

“We?” Katz repeated looked between Will and Hannibal who was gazing at the empath as if the sun itself was shining out of his eyes, “Well tonights the night for revelations I guess” she murmured to herself while Zeller let out a cry

“I knew it, you owe me fifty bucks!” he cried slapping Jimmy on the shoulder while the other man groaned
Will turned to look at them “You took bets on this?”

Zeller shrugged “And on you and Alana Bloom getting together, or Dr Lecter and Alana, or all three…”

“And that’s enough of that conversation!” Bella said shaking her head

Jack gave Hannibal and Will a hard stare “How long has this…” he gestured to them “Been going on?”

“A few weeks” Hannibal replied “Since just before Gideon”

“And you were planning on telling me when?” Jack asked an unmistakable tone of anger in his voice

“Now” Will said glancing to the left as Abigail and Alana returned “We are telling you now Jack, not that it’s really anyone else’s business but our own”

“You are his patient” Jack growled darkly “Forgive me if I am wrong but that is against medical ethics”

“Will was never officially my patient” Hannibal said “And now that we have engaged in a relationship I will refer him to another psychiatrist if he requires treatment”

“Relationship?” Alana asked with a frown that morphed into an expression of shock “You two are…oh!, I…, congratulations!” she stammered momentarily lost for words and more than a little jealous at the fact the two men she fancied had now found each other

“Thank you Alana” Hannibal said lifting his hand from Will’s knee and took Will’s hand raising it to his lips and kissing the knuckles making Abigail giggle and coo at them while Zeller wolf whistled and caused a blush to rise in Will’s cheeks

“Well” Katz said raising her wine glass “Here to you then” she toasted “And long may it last”.

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Despite Jack’s black mood after the revelations of the evening the night had progressed well, and by the time everyone left and Abigail had gone to bed (She was spending the night with Hannibal and Will) it was getting on for midnight.

“That was quite a surprise you laid on for me tonight” Hannibal said as he and Will did the washing up since he was incapable of leaving the dishes till morning!

“Yeah sorry about that” Will said giving Hannibal a sheepish grin “I just felt I had to tell Jack there and then, putting it off wouldn’t make it any easy or him anymore agreeable so I just did it”

“I’m not upset with you beloved just surprised” Hannibal assured him “Pleasantly surprised though”

“Beloved?” Will repeated snagging his fingers under Hannibal’s waist coat and tugging him closer “That going to be your pet name for me?”

“Among others I’m sure” Hannibal said reaching up to stroke his hand through Will’s hair “My Little Mongoose will likely remain my favourite”

“Hmm comparing me to a rodent, I’m still not sure how to feel about that” Will said but wasn’t really bothered, in fact he found the term very endearing, and the way Hannibal whispered the words with his accent lilting them very seductive, as he leaned in for a kiss he groaned
“I’ll be glad when we can finally be a bit more…, physical than right now”

Hannibal gave a breathy chuckle that sent warm air floating over his skin and made his nerves tingle
“Patience is a virtue I am told”

“Patience blows!” Will grumbled

“Now that’s rude!” Hannibal mock scolded “What ever am I to do about that?”

Feeling daring Will shrugged and turned away pretending to be involved in drying the plates “I’m sure you’ll think of something!”, within a second he was seized from behind spun round and pressed back against the counter being given the most breath taking passionate kiss of his life!, he would swear that every nerve in his body seemed to burst into flames at Hannibal’s incredibly skilled lips and tongue working on his, seemingly devouring his mouth and claiming it completely!.

When the kiss finally ended he sagged against the counter breathless and hard, a sentiment he could feel reciprocated in Hannibal by the firmness pressing against his thigh
“In Florence I will make you mine” Hannibal whispered into his ear “In the most beautiful city in the world I will lay you down on a bed of satin and silk, strip you bare, and devour you body and soul!”

Coming from a cannibal this should have made Will terrified but instead it turned him on even more and he whimpered at the ignored organ in his pants “If I live that long!” he whined “Carry on like that and I’ll die of blue balls long before then!”.

Chapter 15

Will should have known that Jack wouldn't give up so easily.

He'd kept his peace at the party, probably so he didn't upset Bella in her weakened state.

But just five days later he cornered Will in one of the large parks in Baltimore where he was letting his pack run off their energy.

"I'm not coming back to work Jack" Will said as soon as Jack had joined him "I'm still on sick leave anyway"

"I know that" Jack said "I'm not asking you to come back to work but I am asking for your help"

Will rolled his eyes and bent down as Buster returned with a toy, taking it from his mouth Will threw it again and the Dog charged off after it accompanied by several others

"It's about the Shrike Will, and Abigail Hobbs"

Will froze for second before rising and placed a hand over his abdomen to cover for his shock, he couldn't afford to give Jack any reason to be suspicious and the man was a behaviour expert so he had to be careful

"It still hurts?" Jack asked his eyes flicking down to look at Will's stomach

Will glared at him "I was gutted Jack, it's gonna take a while to recover"

Jack had the grace to shudder at the memory of Will in such a horrific state and mentally reminded himself to be careful not to upset Will as it might set back his recovery.

However it did not stop him from pressing on with the reason for his coming to find Will in the first place.

"Since the discovery of Nick Boyle's body we have been looking into the Shrike again as you know" he said to Will "We've found some oddities"

"Oddities?" Will snorted

"Train tickets two of them going to the same campuses that the girls were abducted from"

Making himself stay relaxed Will swallowed hard and forced his voice to remain calm and nonchalant even while his heart pounded hard inside his chest in growing worry.

“So?” he asked “She was planning on going to collage, it’s no surprise that she went to see them, how was she to know that her Father wanted to do more than chose a campus for higher education?”

“So you’re saying she was blind to what her Father was doing?, that she had no idea he was abducting young women on their trips together?” Jack scoffed “Will open your eyes how could she possibly have not known?”

“Easily!” Will snarled whirling round on Jack “People generally only see what they want to see!, we can all delude ourselves if we want to, especially when it comes to someone we love.
Abigail could have easily kept the truth from herself simply because it was too painful to bear!”, he let out a shallow laugh and ran a hand through his hair “God damn it Jack put yourself in her shoes for a moment!. Imagine yourself as a teenage girl who’s Father is a serial killer only keeping from murdering you by killing girls who look just like you, but you love him, he’s been the dominant figure in your life since day one, you can’t imagine a world without him in it because he has always been there guiding you, supporting you, and in a very real way controlling you, could you bring yourself to comprehend turning in the man who is not only your Father but also your idol?, I know I couldn’t”

Will did have a point that Jack had to admit, but he wasn’t letting this go simply because Abigail could play a sympathy card

“That her Father had power over her doesn’t make her innocent Will, and certainly not when it comes to Nick Boyle”

“The Copy Cat killed Nick Boyle” Will snapped

“We don’t know that, Abigail is hiding something, even Alana says that…”

“Hannibal doesn’t” Will stated “Alana was unconscious, what would she know about what happened?, or are you now going to accuse Hannibal of being in some conspiracy with Abigail?”

“Should?” Jack asked with a perfect poker face “It is rather suspicious, him the only witness to Abigail fighting off Nick Boyle’s attack and Boyle’s escape, then there’s you, all we have is his word that The Ripper was there, add in Budge’s attack and…”

“Dear God you have any idea of how paranoid you sound?” Will cried and suddenly doubled over gripping his stomach and moaning in pain.

He might not be the worlds best actor but he could fake stomach cramps well enough and Jack was getting just a little too close for comfort on the truth, he needed to throw Jack off the scent long enough to warn Hannibal as to what was going on. Jack was too smart to be kept in the dark indefinitely so they needed an escape route right now or any hope for their future, for Abigail’s future would be lost for good.

“Will, Will whats wrong?” Jack asked alarmed

“Stomach cramps” Will said breathlessly “The muscles seize up sometimes” he let out a pained gasp and tried to stand up right but made sure to stumble so Jack would support him

On hearing their Master’s cried of pain all of the pack had run to join them and growled warningly at Jack who’d hands were on their human

“S’ok guys” Will grunted making himself keep up the pretence of being in pain for Jacks benefit “Looks like the day outs been cut short though”

“Lets get you back to Hannibal” Jack said slipping Will’s arm over his shoulders and wrapping a hand about his waist to support him “Unless you need the hospital?”

“No, no Hannibal’s is fine” Will insisted wincing again and breathing heavily so Jack would be further convinced that he was ill.

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Hannibal had just returned from Bedelia’s when Jack came into his house support a pale face and panting Will who looked to be in agony!.

“What happened?” he demanded going straight to his lover’s side and taking his weight from Jack

“Stomach cramps he said” Jack replied “He just doubled over in the park”

“Stomach cramps?” Hannibal repeated

“Play along!” Will hissed into his ear sharply and shot Hannibal a wide eyed warning look that told Hannibal everything he needed to know for the moment

“Sounds more like muscular spasm and possibly gastralgia” Hannibal said which pretty much meant stomach cramps in a fancier terminology

“Lets get him onto the bed, once stretched out and relaxed it should start to ease”

“You’re sure he doesn’t need the hospital?” Jack asked worriedly

“No, there’s nothing more they can do for him than I can do here” Hannibal said “Laying down, a simple pain killer, and maybe a heat pack to hold to his stomach and the cramping will ease off”

“You’re sure?” Jack asked helping Hannibal get Will up the stairs and into Hannibal’s own bedroom where they lay Will down on the bed, his Pack naturally followed but stopped on

the floor whining for their Master worriedly

“I’ll be fine Jack” Will said giving him a wan smile “You should get back to work”

To his credit Jack looked reluctant to abandon Will but as Hannibal made himself busy arranging pillows about Will and undoing his coat and shirt he decided that he was in capable hands.

“I’ll see myself out” he said “I hope you feel better soon Will”

“Thanks Jack” Will whispered keeping the strain on his face until Jack was out of the door.

He and Hannibal waited until they heard the front door open and close then he relaxed with a deep sigh and Hannibal sat down on the bed besides him

“Care to explain what that was all about?” he asked Will

“Jack’s getting suspicious of you and Abigail” Will said sitting up right “There are train tickets to all the campuses the girls went missing from, two tickets, a man and a girl travelling together”

Hannibal’s face betrayed no emotion at this but his eyes flashed with something that Will read as concern

“I’ve said it’s because she was looking at collages and he took advantage of that, I’ve made a case for some kind of Stockholm syndrome effecting Abigail but I don’t know how long it’ll hold Jack off the scent, and then there’s you”

“Me?” Hannibal asked raising a pale eyebrow

“Too many coincidences” Will said “Budge’s attack on you, you being the only witness to Abigail fending off Boyle and him escaping, Me!, you claim that you saw the Ripper driving away from the observatory, Jack is no fool he can connect dots as well as anyone, and there are too many leading back to you Hannibal”
Hannibal sighed “Perhaps I have been remiss and over confident” he admitted “At least with your warning we have time to plan an escape before Uncle Jack learns too much more than he already has”

Will nodded his head “Where will we go?” he asked

Hannibal smiled “Why Europe of course”.

Chapter 16

Will was still shaking and staring at the blood on his hands as he sat in the passenger seat of Hannibal's Bentley.

Abigail was in the back and shedding silent tears as they drove through the rain to Hannibal's safe house where their passports, new identities, and plane tickets waited.

Hannibal was silent as he drove, his attention on the road which with the heavy rain was too treacherous not to be attentive. However his eyes occasionally flickered to the right, to Will and he took his right hand off the wheel and placed it on Will's knee giving it a gentle squeeze.

"It'll be alright" he said as Will looked up

"Put all this behind you Will" he said glancing to the younger man briefly "All of it, we have a new life ahead of us now, together"

Abigail sniffed and wiped her reddened eyes "As a family?" she asked

Hannibal smiled "Yes, as a family".

****

Forty Eight hours earlier

Baltimore

"We can not take seven dogs with us to Europe" Hannibal stated to Will from the internal balcony in his office as he went through his patient records choosing the ones which he needed to destroy to protect those whom he had seen a potential for perfect brutality. The run of the Mill fuckwits like Franklyn he had not reason to destroy and so left them intact.

"I know" Will said feeding sheets of paper in the fireplace and stocking the flames with a poker "I just can't bear the thought of putting them into a rescue centre and not knowing what'll happen to them"

"Well then" Hannibal said leaning over the rail with more sheets of paper clutched in his hands "It is good that you shall not have to do such a thing"

Will frowned in confusion and made his way to stand under the balcony and caught the papers Hannibal threw down

“I have made arrangements for them to be taken to my families estate in Lithuania, my late Aunts Lady in Waiting Chiyoh will care for them until we have established ourselves well enough that they may join us”.

It was ridiculous Hannibal thought that he should find his belly warming and his heart fluttering at the sight of Will’s face lighting up in joy like this, but the sight was so beautiful that Hannibal could not resist and he felt very pleased with himself for his solution to the canine dilemma.

“When will they leave?” Will asked, their own arrangements to leave were two days from now, Hannibal had secured them false documentation, passports and plane tickets out of the country all of which he hidden away at a safe house along with three suitcases full of clothes and ten thousand in Euro which Hannibal had changed from US dollars at various airports for them to live off wherever in Europe they went to.

Hannibal was being surprisingly vague about the details of where they would be going exactly which Will suspected was purposeful so he could maintain the element of surprise for his Lover and surrogate daughter.

Abigail had seemingly runaway from the Unit she’d been staying at and all but disappeared. (Seemingly)
She was actually hiding at Hannibal’s house waiting to leave with him and Will, but as far as Jack and his team were concerned she had fled into the night to escape justice and no one had any idea where she had gone.

“They will be picked up tomorrow morning and taken to the airport” Hannibal said in answer to Will’s question “I am told they are not to be fed after midnight as they will need to be sedated for the flight”

Will nodded his head swallowing past the painful lump in his throat, parting from his beloved pack was going to be hard, horribly hard, but he could console himself on the fact that it wouldn’t be forever and once they were settled he would be reunited with them.

“I thought they might enjoy some steaks tonight as a special treat” Hannibal said slowly making his way down the ladder “After all I am sure they will miss you as much as you will miss them”

Will beamed at him and it was like the sun had come out from behind a cloud for Hannibal “You are the best of boyfriends!” he declared taking the files from Hannibal and going to feed them into the fire

“Boyfriend?”, Hannibal’s nose wrinkled and he looked truly disgusted with the term

“Okay that is a bit boy bandish” Will chuckled stoking the fire again so the pages would catch quicker “Partner?” he offered “Significant other?”

“Fiancé?” Hannibal suggested back

Will froze not entirely sure he had heard Hannibal correctly, then as he stiffly replaced the poker in it’s holder he turned and let out a gasp upon seeing a small velvet box in Hannibal’s hands

“I did have a mind to do this in a more fitting setting” Hannibal said “I had planned candle light, champagne, appropriate music playing but…,” he paused and smiled “As the French say Carpe Diem”

“Hannibal!” Will whispered struggling to get the words out of his tight throat

“Will Graham Will you Marry me?”

Will let out a laugh that was almost a sob and nodded his head, “Yes!” he managed feeling slightly hysterical as well as overwhelmingly elated

Hannibal looked both relieved and immensely pleased with himself as he opened the box and present Will with a solid gold ring with a square face that was studded with small but flawless diamonds and must have cost upwards of four or five thousand dollars

“Hannibal” Will whispered holding out his shaking left hand upon which Hannibal slipped the ring which was naturally a perfect fit for his finger

“My dearest Will” Hannibal breathed taking his hand and kissing each finger one by one “We will wed in Europe, Honeymoon there, and find our new home”

Will nodded his head, arranging things was not his forte, he got to flustered and side tracked when trying to arrange events, he could never remember to call florists or how many place settings to order so to have Hannibal make these decisions was a relief to him.

“Abigail will of course be our Bridesmaid and one witness, and I’m sure we can find a parishioner in whatever Church we use to act as our second witness”

“And I’ll be William James Graham-Lecter”

“Graham-Lecter not Lecter-Graham?”

“No it doesn’t have the same ring” Will said and looked up at Hannibal with curiosity “Do you have a middle name?”

“I have in fact. Anatolijus”

“Hm Hannibal Anatolijus Lecter, somehow it suits you” Will mused and looked down at his new ring marvelling at the way it sparkled in the fire light “Will we go to your estate at all?” he asked looking back up at Hannibal and frowned as a shadow passed over the man’s face. It

was brief, gone in a second but Will saw it never the less “Bad memories?”, it wasn’t really a question

“Very bad” Hannibal agreed

“Will you tell me one day?” Will asked, not pushing for the details but letting Hannibal know that he was there and would listen when Hannibal felt ready to speak of his past

The Doctor smiled and dipped his head in a nod “One day”.

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BAU

“Hannibal Lecter!, Doctor Hannibal Lecter, one of the most renowned and respected Surgeons and Psychiatrists in the world and you suspect him of aiding and abetting a Murderer?”

This came from a disbelieving and appalled Alana Bloom standing in Jack’s office looking incredulous
“You can not honestly be serious about this Jack!”

“Believe me” Jack growled “I am more than serious”

Alana snorted and shook her head, folding her arms under her breasts and shifted her weight to her left hip

“Alana look at the evidence!” Jack snarled standing up from the desk and throwing a case file on the table “The Hobs house, you’re knocked unconscious, supposedly by Nick Boyle but we have only Hannibal’s word for that, and we have only Hannibal’s word for the fact that Boyle escaped the house alive”

“Along with Abigail’s word”

“A murderer herself” Jack stated and held up a hand to prevent Alana from denying it “She might not have manually participated in killing those girls but she was involved in their abduction so she is a murderer by association if nothing else and I’m not entirely convinced she didn’t assist her Father in cutting those girls up, plus add to that the fact she’s gone on the run rather than give an explanation to the train tickets or anything else…,”

“She’s scared!” Alana cried “She’s panicking and desperate!”

“Or manipulative and conniving” Jack argued “She can easily play the part of the victim, put on a tears and make a show to tug on heart strings but behind that mask she has been playing you and everyone from the start”

“Including Hannibal?” Alana asked pointedly

Jack sighed and looked down at his desk “I wish I could think so but no, I think that since Nick Boyle they had been in collusion, I think he helped her cover up Boyle’s murder, why I don’t know except for the possibility that he is…, like Hobbs, and it intrigued him to see what would happen from doing so”

“Like Hobbs?”

“Or worse” Jack grunted and gestured to the papers spilling over his desk “Look at the profiles of the Ripper and The Copycat Killer, Intelligent Psychopaths, likely medical and surgically trained, middle aged by the degree of sophistication used…,”

“That could describe a thousand men!” Alana yelled “Christ it even describes Chilton!”

Jack glared “I said intelligent!”

Alana snorted at that agreeing with the statement

“Look at the rest Alana and tell me you don’t see a pattern here!. Budge inexplicably going to Lecter’s office to kill his friend and somehow winding up dead himself, a man who had over powered three law enforcement professionals and killed two of them is easily fought off and killed by a mild mannered Psychiatrist?. Then there’s Will’s attack by Gideon, all we have is Lecter’s word that there was ever anyone but himself, Will, and Gideon in the observatory, there were no tire or footprints but their own, no evidence of a fourth person ever being in there at all, and why in the hell would Gideon have called Lecter at all?, he could just have easily have dispatched Will for the Ripper and then killed Lecter later if he wished to”

“So what are you saying?” Alana asked shaking her head and dropping her arms to her sides again “That Hannibal is The Ripper?”

“Yes” Jack stated “That is exactly what I am saying and one way or another I will prove it”.

Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Wolftrap

It felt like the ending of an era, which Will supposed it was, he had been living here in his farm house for a good long time now, all alone save for his pack of strays.

So to be leaving his house, to be entering into a relationship, to be getting married!.

All of it was so very different to how his life had been before that this really was an ending of an era.

The era of his isolated and seclusive existence was now over, his sole companions would not be canine, his bed would not be empty save for those dogs that wanted to snuggle in the night, he would not exist in a silent and empty world where his fear of being too close to individuals because of his empathy kept him in this depressive void.

He was now engaged to an enigmatic, charming, sophisticated gentleman who possessed a formidable intellect, a naturally seductive charisma, and deeply poetic soul.

Will did not mean poetic in the sense of love sonnets and humorous limericks, Hannibal's poetry was like that of Dante's Inferno, it was dark and violent, filled with brutal passion and delicious anguish.

To step into Hannibal's world was the same as the Temptation of Christ, the same as Apple in Eden, while One knew One should not accept, should not give in to the temptation, the desire to do so was just too powerful to resist, and just like Eve, just like the unwitting Adam Will had willingly bitten into that apple and sealed his fate.

But unlike Adam and Eve who had mourned the loss of Eden, had begged forgiveness for their transgression, Will did not wish to nor would he ask forgiveness of anyone including God, his life before Hannibal had been so barren, so desolate, so utterly lonely that he could not find it in himself to regret the ending of it.

While his social difficulties had made him wish to keep his own company his natural instincts as a human had made this an undesirable act.

Humans were not meant to be solitary animals, they craved and needed to socialize, they needed to be amongst their own species as it was, isolation had a devastating effect on the human psyche and now that he looked at his past self comparing it with the person he was now or the person he was becoming he could see that he had been suffering himself due to his self imposed isolation.

He had not thought of himself as being depressed then, maybe because he had not known how different life could be, but now his eyes had been opened he knew that he had been at least mildly depressed.

It was Hannibal he had to thank for bringing him out of that emptiness, for showing him how full and rich his life could be with the psychiatrist at his side.

Sometimes Will still felt like he had to pinch himself for that, as if this was a dream rather than reality, even now as he gathered the belongings he didn't wish to part with and packed them into a holdall and shut his front door for the very last time he had to take a second to convince himself that this really was happening.

That He Will Graham was in fact leaving his farm house and going to Europe to be married to the man he loved!.

"Will!"

Alana's voice brought him out of his thoughts and he saw her standing on his front porch "Going somewhere?" she asked pointing to the holdall

"Yeah, yes Hannibal's" Will replied, not an out right lie, he was going to Hannibal's, at least for tonight, then of course they would be going heaven only knew where!, well Heaven and Hannibal since he likely had it all worked out and was simply refusing to tell either Will or Abigail so he could mysterious and annoying at the same time!.

"Well it's all really happening then"

Will frowned at Alana's words as a shiver of concern ran down his spine, silently his brain began run over her words and question them anxiously
What did she know?

Did she suspect what was going on?

Had Jack sent her here as a decoy while he went for Hannibal?

Was Hannibal safe?

"I have to say I didn't see it coming" Alana said shifting her weight to one hip and folding her arms under her breasts with her hands tucked beneath to keep warm "You and Hannibal, I never thought, never even imagined that you would…,"

Oh, Oh!, and Will relaxed, Alana was talking about him and Hannibal moving in together, living together, being in a relationship

"It was a surprise to me too" he said offering her a small smile "I never thought that Hannibal would find me remotely suitable as a…, romantic partner, we're so different in so many ways, but then they do say that opposites attract"

“They do” Alana agreed or at least verbally agreed, but her body language said something very different. While on the surface she was smiling and happy and wishing him and Hannibal well underneath she was…bitterly jealous, almost spitefully so!.

Will did not flatter himself into thinking that it was himself that Alana had hoped to be falling into bed with, she had made her feelings on that subject very clear in regards to his stability or lack there of, no it was Hannibal she had wanted, Hannibal she had hoped to one day be married to, Hannibal she had secretly desired all these years, and now she had lost him, to Will of all people.

The scruffy unstable empath who knew little to nothing of culture, was about as sophisticated as a hot dog from a street vender, and was thoroughly lacking when it came social etiquette.

“Are you sure about this Will?” she asked narrowing her eyes at him “I mean really sure, all this is happening so fast don’t you think?, it’s not like you and Hannibal have known each other very long and to be moving in together it’s…”

“It’s what Alana?” Will asked deciding not to bother being kind to her
“I’m just worried for you is all” Alana said sounding defensive now “Considering how you are, if all this falls apart then…”

“How I am?” Will asked giving her a small smile “Hannibal loves how I am, he wants me to be exactly as I am, something if I recall you found distasteful and undesirable”

“That’s not..”

“That is the point Alana, you are not here because you are worried I’ll fall apart if things between me and Hannibal fall apart, you are here because you are hoping to play on my fears of self doubt and drive a wedge between Hannibal and myself so you can make a move on Hannibal!”

Alana’s mouth dropped open in utter shock, not that Will would say this though that was what she was trying to project, but rather that she had given away her jealousy so easily to Will

“Don’t bother to deny it Alana, we both know that I am saying is true so lets just leave it here before we end up saying something we might regret”

“Might regret?” Alana asked incredulous “You don’t regret this?”

Will’s face was complete blank as he stared at her “No”

Leaving Alana standing dazed upon the porch Will walked to his car and climbed in throwing the holdall on the passenger seat and started the engine, he took one last look at the farm house before pulling out into the road and driving away, or rather driving towards his new life.

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Baltimore

Will had been expecting to come home, and yes he was thinking of Hannibal's house as home, to the delicious scent of dinner being cooked, the sound of operatic music playing on the sound system, and the beautiful sight of Hannibal in the kitchen, his shirt sleeves rolled up to his elbows, an apron about his trim waist making him look domestic and sexy at the same time.

How he achieved that Will wasn't sure but he knew that he wasn't complaining in the least!.

Well it was to the sounds of music playing on the sound system that he came home to, and the sounds of a struggle!.

Dropping his bag on the floor Will ran through the house towards the sounds which led him into the kitchen where Hannibal was embroiled in a fight with Jack!.

Blood had soaked the right shoulder of Hannibal's shirt and his face was bruised and cut from several blows but the impressive blood loss on his shirt was not his own but Jack's, having come from a knife slice to his right hand no doubt courtesy of Hannibal whom he had by the throat!.

Hannibal was struggling for air which had been cut off by the tie that Jack had about his throat, he was reaching to the floor trying to grab onto a shard of glass, one of the fallen knives, anything so he might be able to defend himself!.

Will did not think, did not pause for a second, he simply reacted.

In a single fluid move he was across the kitchen and grabbing the fallen vegetable knife from the floor then a second later he was plunging it into the thick flesh of Jack's throat!.

Shock and horror spread over Jack's face as he stared at Will.

Never, Never had he suspected that Will might not be on his side, never had he thought that Will would have thrown his lot in with the Chesapeake Ripper, never had he prepared to be fighting not just Hannibal but Will Graham too.

Feeling oddly detached from himself Will pulled the knife out of Jack's neck and let it slide to the ground, he could feel the warm fresh blood on his hands, feel it splattering his face, see

it dripping onto the floor but for this moment he could not quite reconcile the fact that it was blood he had drawn from the throat of a man he had at least for a time considered a friend.

Dropping the tie about Hannibal's neck Jack clamped a hand to his throat and ran for his life, locking himself in Hannibal's expansive pantry and set about trying to stop the bleeding by wrapping his tie about his own throat and pushing down hard on the wound.

With numb fingers he drew his mobile from his suit jacket and dialled Bella, if he was to die he needed to say goodbye, he couldn't go without saying goodbye…,

Will stood like a statue staring uncomprehending at the blood on his hands while Hannibal threw himself at the pantry door trying to break it down.

"Where's Abigail?" he asked in a horse voice not looking up at Hannibal

"Here" Hannibal grunted throwing his weight against the door again "She's ready to go"

"Yes" Will whispered nodding his head "We're ready"

"Hannibal!".

The unexpected female voice drew the attention of both men and they turned to see Alana standing in the door way looking terrified.

Having been unable to leave things as they were with Will and possibly risk losing any friendship at all with Hannibal Alana had followed after Will five minutes later and had walked into this…bloodbath

"What…?" she whispered looking at the blood, the glass, the knives, at the scene of violence before her

"Go now Alana" Hannibal said his voice low almost guttural, his mask was off, the predator beneath, the wolf with it's glistening ravenous fangs was revealed, and Will looked on in awe at the sight of Hannibal in all his vicious majesty.

"If you leave now Alana then you can be assured that we will not come after you" he said to her stalking slowly towards her as she backed away looking like the deer before the might Alpha Wolf who was about to sink his teeth into her throat

"We?" she whispered tears rolling down her cheeks "You and Will?"

Hannibal smiled, a cold deadly smile that showed his teeth "Will and I" he breathed walking closer to her "All you need do is nothing and all will be well for you, if not then…," Hannibal didn't need to finish his sentence because Alana turned and fled, Hannibal tore after

her like a predator for it's prey but Will remained in the kitchen, calmly he lifted his mobile from his pocket and called an ambulance

"Yes Operator I need an ambulance a man has been stabbed through the throat and a woman has…", there was the sound of shattering glass and Will saw a shape fly past the window "Has been pushed from a window…, third floor I believe…, no I can not stay on the line but if you would like either of these people to live I suggest you come to this address as fast as possible"

Ending the call Will tossed his mobile into the sink and walked out of the kitchen to join a shaking tearful Abigail and a resigned Hannibal in the hallway.

It had been Abigail who'd shoved Alana out the window then he deduced as they walked out of the door to Hannibal's car and climbed in.

****

Showered, dressed in clean smart clothes, and sat in first class on a jet heading for Paris Hannibal happily accepted a glass of champagne from the flight attendant, handing another to Will, and a glass of orange juice to Abigail.

"To us?" he suggested as a toast

"To the future" Will countered but it was Abigail who came up with the perfect combination

"To our Future".

TBC ……

Chapter End Notes

There will be a sequel, Hannibal and Will getting married in Paris, living in Florence, running into Jack again etc...

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!